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45  
JUN / MAY 28 - JUNE 4, 2008 | FREE  
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# VUEWEEKLY



## BELJA FLOR

CALGARY BAND DISCUSSES ART, ALBERTA AND ITS  
NEW ALBUM, *THE AMERICAN* [ BRYAN BIRTLES / 35 ]

nextfest  
PROGRAM INSIDE

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# COLDPLAY



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ALJA FLOR / 35

"I've always wanted to try and invest in Calgary and instead of going where the action is try to start the action in Calgary and in Alberta. It's a struggle trying to be an artist in this province and I think Edmonton is the exact same way."  
—Stephen van Kampen, musician, on dedicating himself to the Alberta music scene.

FRONT



BIKE MONTH / 7

"What's really more indicative for me is the increase in the number of people who are willing to ride in the winter. It's always hard to tell in the summertime because everyone loves to ride in the summer ... but in the wintertime, then you can really tell. And we've seen increases every year." —Cliff Vallentgoed, owner of Redbike, on the increasing popularity of cycling in Edmonton.

ARTS



AGAINST THE GRAIN / 21

"Courtesans, geisha, kabuki actors—some were ads for theatre or brothels, or lowbrow decorative nature scenes. In the late 19th century, you see landscapes—people could be tourists in their country."  
—Jim Corrigan, curator, on his exhibit of Japanese woodblock prints.

FILM



THE UNFORESEEN / 28

"The other ace in Dunn's sleeve is the sheer aesthetic beauty of the film. Dunn and cinematographer Lee Daniel shoot much of *The Unforeseen* like landscape painters, pulling striking, lyrical images out of both the natural world and its manufactured, suburban cognate." —David Berry, critic, on Laura Dunn's documentary.

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Ride-in Movie Nights

June 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30  
7 pm @ Metro Cinema  
9828-101A Avenue

June 21

9:30 pm (byo picnic) & 10:30 pm  
(film) @ Victoria Cricket Pitch  
12130 River Valley Road

Commuter Race & Breakfast

June 4  
7 am Start (Optimum Health  
71 Avenue/109 Street)  
Finish (Breakfast at South Library Plaza  
101A Avenue/100 Street) until 9 am

24 Hour Bike Repair-a-Thon

Noon June 14 to Noon June 15  
Edmonton Bicycle Commuters'  
BikeWorks 10047-80 Avenue (rear alley)

Bike to Work Breakfasts

June 6 & 27  
7-9 am @ 109 Street & 88 Avenue  
June 20  
7-9 am @ 109 Street & 97 Avenue  
June 13  
7-9 am @ Churchill Square

Mocktails on the Bridge

June 12 & 26  
4-6 pm @ 109 Street & 97 Avenue

Bike Salons

June 3, 10, 17 & 24  
7 pm @ Three Bananas Café  
9918-102 Avenue

Bikeology Festival

June 28  
Free mechanic checks, prizes, cycle  
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12-5 pm @ Beaver Hills House Park  
105 Street & Jasper Avenue

For a full listing of events visit:  
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BIKEOLOGY



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## Better late than never?

SCOTT HARRIS / [scott@vueweekly.com](mailto:scott@vueweekly.com)

From a public relations perspective, May hasn't been the greatest month for the tar sands industry or the government of Alberta, which is scrambling to pull together its \$25 million tar sands branding exercise at the same time as stories that fly in the face of the spin keep popping up.

First, of course, there was the international fallout from the 500 ducks that died at the end of April after landing on a Syncrude tailings lake. Then came the revelation that last September one million litres of wastewater containing oil and grease was released from a Suncor upgrader into the Athabasca River. The good people at Suncor finally got around to telling the people in Fort Chipewyan, a Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations community downstream from the tar sands operations, about the spill this month.

Next, a report released by the Pembina Institute found that after four decades of tar sands operations only 0.2 per cent of disturbed land has been certified as reclaimed, taking the sheen off those glossy photos of happy bison.

On May 27, Liberal environment critic David Swann released yet another piece of evidence, this one a November 2007 report prepared for Suncor that found more than five million litres per day of toxic water from a decades-old tailings lake have been leaking into the groundwater and the Athabasca River.

Not surprisingly, none of these revelations come as comforting news to the residents of Fort Chipewyan, who for years have tried to draw attention to the high rates of rare cancers they are witnessing in their community. Alberta Health and Health Canada are now investigating the reports, and the Alberta Cancer Board is conducting a review of cancer clusters in the community, which it hopes to complete by the fall.

The government is in full damage control mode as the month draws to a close, with more than a dozen investigations of its own on the go. Responding to questions by Swann in the legislature, Premier Ed Stelmach revealed that his government is pulling together a comprehensive baseline study of toxins in the water and soil to replace the "bunch of little things ... a study here, a study there" that the government has been relying on up to now to monitor the largest industrial project on the planet. Not a bad idea after 40 years of activity, but it's shocking that it has taken a month of crises to convince the government they may need a way to measure what's happening in the north of the province. ▼

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# VUEWEEKLY

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## MAIL LETTERS

### VEGETARIAN DIET IS BEST FOR ALL

As much as I regard the writings of Connie Howard as honest, accurate and timely, I must disagree with her on the issue of vegetarianism not being for everyone ("One more for the veggies," May 1 - May 7, 2008). Sorry Connie, but it really is best for all.

What she misconstrues is that the vast majority of people on this continent have an abysmal diet, and when many of them turn to a meatless diet in an effort to improve their health, they drop the meat and keep the rest of the bad stuff. Unfortunately for many, the only thing in their diet that was providing some essential nutrients is the animal part, or secretion thereof.

Another very important myth that needs to be dispelled is that getting protein is a problem. Adequate amounts can be easily sourced from the rest of the stuff on your plate, even if the rest of the stuff is only fries, a pickle, lettuce, tomato and ketchup you will survive much better. There has never been a case of protein deficiency unless the victim was simply living off, say, chocolate cake exclusively.

There is a difference of degree in the

types of protein available: animal protein is bad and plant protein is good. Evidence is showing up every day to back this up and the strongest case comes from the best selling book, *The China Study*, by T Colin Campbell of Cornell University.

Why do we have such large and growing numbers of cancer sufferers? In countries where people smoke, suffer traffic fumes and face many other environmental toxins but don't eat a lot of meat, there are very low cancer rates. As soon as they migrate to this continent and start eating like we do they start developing cancers. Recent evidence seems to suggest that animal protein makes for a more acidic environment in the body. Cancer cells love an acidic environment and free radicals go wild. Evidence is now indicating that on an animal-based diet the immune system cannot penetrate and destroy the cancer cells that we all harbour naturally.

Animal produce also has saturated fat in large quantities. Saturated fat causes arteries to clog up resulting in atherosclerosis, strokes and impotence—Connie knows this and should be ashamed of suggesting it's OK for some to eat animals. Even if we ate range-fed organic animals the protein problem would still be there.

We deceive ourselves into believing that we evolved as carnivores. Sure, we are omnivorous and probably opportunistically ate the odd dead bird or whatever, but the vast history of our

evolutionary past was one of plants, roots, shoots and berries.

We share our genes with apes and chimpanzees, and should examine their diets if we want to really know what is good for us. Orangutans are complete vegans and the vast majority of other primates are near-vegan omnivores. They consume only the milk of their own species that is designed for them by evolution and don't go sucking on the teats of other animals long after gestation is over like we do.

For me, all these health issues are more than enough to convince me of the merits of veganism. For those who need a little more persuasion, consider the environmental impacts of meat eating or the humanitarian issues of billions of animals being slaughtered every single day so that we can be fat and die early.

Suffice to say that if you want to live long and prosper, eat stuff that doesn't have a face or a mother. To get started, check out our web site [VofA.ca](http://VofA.ca).

DAVID PARKER  
 VEGETARIANS OF ALBERTA ASSOCIATION

*Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email ([letters@vueweekly.com](mailto:letters@vueweekly.com)). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.*



# Bike Month rides the wave of cycling popularity

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

To the uninitiated, cycling on the increasingly car-choked streets of Edmonton might seem like an undertaking tantamount to attempted suicide.

There's the crumbling infrastructure that can turn the right-hand lane into a pothole-littered, rim-bending slalom. There's the issue of the particularly Albian affinity for oversized trucks to contend with. There are the kilometres of wide-open, multi-lane sprawl that extends out in all directions, where it seems as though city planners are actively discouraging travel by any means save the automobile.

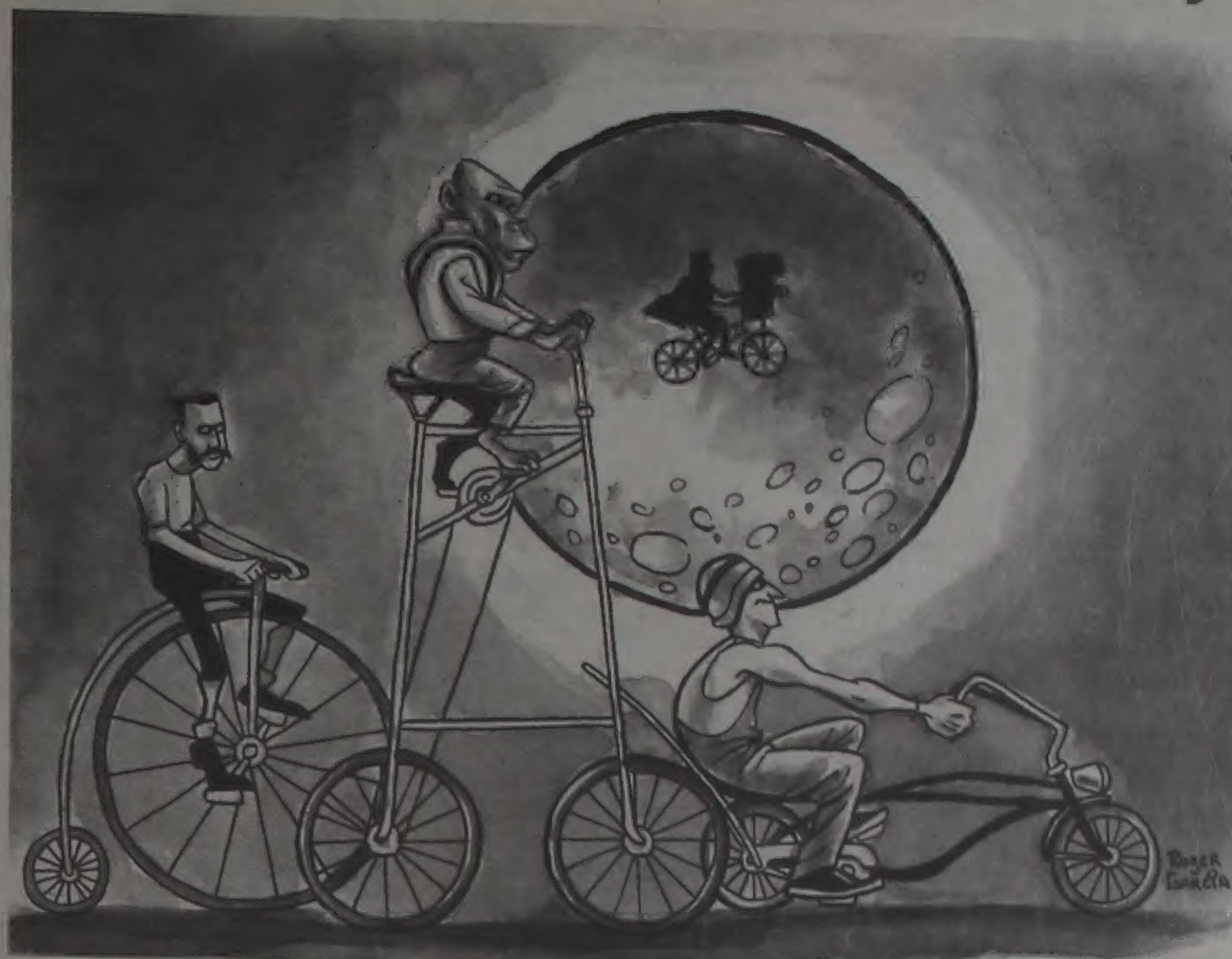
These impressions even seem to be borne out by recent Statistics Canada numbers, which identified Edmonton as the most car-addicted city in the country, with 77 per cent of residents making all their daily trips exclusively by car.

But despite it all—or perhaps because of it—Edmonton is home to a vibrant bike culture with a long history.

"I'm an original Edmontonian, and I've worked in shops since the late-'70s and have owned this shop for 11 years," says Cliff Vallentgoed, the owner of Redbike, one of Edmonton's many speciality bike shops. "And I would say that Edmonton has always had a bike culture. Back when I was first in the business Edmonton had the reputation of being the city with the highest per-capita bike ownership of any Canadian city. Now, how much riding people were actually doing back then might come into question, but there was a bike culture that people wanted to be a part of. Of course the culture changes and now it changes more rapidly than ever, but there definitely is one. Just take the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters and Critical Mass and People's Pedal and stuff like that—take all that into account and you can start to see the shape of it."

While much of the cycling in Edmonton is still recreational—mountain bikers tearing up trails in the River Valley and families making use of the extensive multiuse trails the city boasts—Vallentgoed says in recent years he's seen a shift in the types of bikes people are looking for when they come into his shop.

"I have a lot of people coming in and saying to me, 'Hey, I'm looking for a bike to ride to work.' People are buying for utility a lot more than they used to. That's not to say that people aren't buying mountain bikes to go out and play, but we sell a lot more city bikes that have been accessorized specifically to make it easy for a person to get to work and be clean when



RIDE!

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they get there and have all their stuff with them," he says.

It's a trend that shows that the barriers that keep people from embracing cycling as a way to get around the city are falling at the same time as there are more reasons than ever—from skyrocketing gas prices to the costs associated with owning and operating a car—for people to start cycling.

"Over the years even without high gas prices we've seen more and more people wanting to ride. I don't know if I could speak to the general trend city-wide, but for us we've definitely moved our average age upwards over the last few years. People for whom the excitement of their first car and that sort of thing has faded enough that they're starting to see the downsides and want something that's a little more economical. I think people come to the other benefits of cycling after that, at least some of them."

Vallentgoed says the upswing in Edmontonians who think of bikes as more than just a recreational activity

can best be seen during the harshest months in the city.

"What's really more indicative for me is the increase in the number of people who are willing to ride in the winter. That to me is the real indicator. It's always hard to tell in the summertime because everyone loves to ride in the summer ... but in the wintertime, then you can really tell. And we've seen increases every year."

Claire Ellick, a sustainable transportation engineer with the City of Edmonton, says that such observations about the jump in the popularity of everyday cycling are reflected in the statistics.

"Based on the 2005 household travel survey cycling trips per day are up certainly—they've increased by 150 per cent between '94 and 2005, so that's great to see."

While cycling still accounts for just over one per cent of trips in the city—up from 0.4 per cent in '94—Ellick says that 25 000 trips are now made by bicycle every day in Edmonton.

The long-awaited update to the 1992 Bicycle Transportation Master Plan, which guides how bicycles are integrated into the overall transportation system, is set to go before city council in July. Ellick hopes that the

plan will continue the trend of the past decade.

"Certainly we hope that with a shift in policies and with the bike plan taking a little bit of a different direction, we hope to be able to encourage more of the on-the-fence cyclists who are not at the state where they're ready to get out and ride their bikes to work to pull more people over to the cycling side of things."

**ENCOURAGING** more people to get behind some handlebars instead of a steering wheel is also the goal of this June's fourth annual **Bike Month**, the month-long festival which grew out of the popularity of the day-long Bikeology Festival, which has been around since 2001.

"The whole beginning of Bike Month and Bikeology has to do with wanting to make biking more accessible," explains Molly Turnbull, one of the organizers with the Bike Month Coalition. "We can talk until we're blue in the face about what infrastructure there is, about what facilities, about myths about how people think they're in trouble in traffic when really they have to be watching for other

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

**THE BIKE MONTH CALENDAR** is packed from start to finish and all the events are free. Here's just some of what's happening around the city to celebrate your two-wheeler. For full details on all events, visit [bikeology.ca](http://bikeology.ca).

## CANADIAN COMMUTER CHALLENGE JUN 1-7

Sign up at [commuterchallenge.ca](http://commuterchallenge.ca) to take part in this cross-Canada competition.

## BICYCLE MOVIE NIGHTS EVERY MON (7:30 PM), METRO CINEMA

Check out page 30 for film reviews.

## BIKE SALONS EVERY TUE (7-9 PM), THREE BANANAS CAFE (SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQ)

Discussion nights on a range of bike topics including winter cycling, adventure travel and cycle touring.

## BIKE-TO-WORK BREAKFASTS EVERY FRI (7-9 AM), VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Free breakfasts, tune-ups and tardy slips for cyclists on their way to work.

## BICYCLE WRITING CIRCLE THU, JUN 5 (10 AM - NOON), THE CARROT (9351-118 AVE)

Come pen your best ode to the bike or rant at the automobile.

## BIKE JEWELRY WORKSHOP THU, JUN 5 (7-9:30 PM), HARCOURT HOUSE (10215-112 ST)

Learn to make jewelry from salvaged bike parts. Registration required at [info@bikeology.ca](mailto:info@bikeology.ca).

## MOCKTAILS ON THE BRIDGE THU, JUN 12 & JUN 26 (4-6 PM), EZIO FARONE PARK (NORTH END OF HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE)

Free smoothies made by a bicycle-powered blender and bike tune-ups.

## 24 HOUR REPAIR-A-THON STARTS SAT, JUN 14 (NOON), BIKEWORKS (10047-80 AVE, ALLEY ENTRANCE)

A 24-hour bike repair marathon hosted at the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' shop. Stop by for a free tune-up or to help out.

## RIDE-IN MOVIE SAT, JUN 21 (11 PM), VICTORIA CRICKET PITCH (RIVER VALLEY ROAD)

An open-air showing of the '80s classic *The Goonies* and judging of the "blow your own horn" writing competition.

## BIKEOLOGY FESTIVAL SAT, JUN 28 (NOON - 5 PM), BEAVER HILLS HOUSE PARK (JASPER AVE & 105 ST)

The annual festival, featuring entertainment, prizes, information and a homemade bike trailer contest.

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# Bill 1 unconstitutional says trade expert

SCOTT HARRIS / [scott@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:scott@vancouverweekly.com)

A leading Canadian trade and public interest lawyer says that Bill 1, which at press time was set for third reading in the provincial legislature, violates constitutional law and should be withdrawn by the government.

In an opinion commissioned by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Steven Shrybman, a lawyer with the firm Sack, Goldblatt and Mitchell, says that Bill 1, the *Trade, Investment And Labour Mobility Agreement Implementation Statutes Amendment Act, 2008*, "directly confront[s] basic constitutional norms, including the rule of law and democracy."

"We found five grounds upon which the constitutionality of the bill and the agreement it seeks to implement would be a fail," explains Shrybman over the phone in Vancouver. "In simple terms this is an attempt by the executive of a government—the cabinet—to arrogate power to itself from the legislature and from the courts and even from the federal government, because much of what they purport to do they don't have the constitutional mandate to do."

Bill 1 is the enabling legislation for the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), a bilateral agreement between Alberta and BC which began on Apr 1, 2007 and will come fully into effect in 2009 if both provinces pass the required legislation.

## NEWS TILMA

The government says the agreement will eliminate unneeded barriers between the two provinces to create the country's second-largest economy. In introducing the bill this April, Premier Ed Stelmach said it would "help ensure that Albertans can quickly take advantage of opportunities on both sides of the border without being hindered by unnecessary government and regulatory red tape."

But critics say TILMA will have a devastating impact on the ability of governments—which under the agreement includes everything from the legislature to municipal councils to local school boards—to pass legislation in the public interest.

"It's a preposterous initiative. The government presents it as an innocuous, limited enterprise and really that's anything but the truth," explains Shrybman. "It's very broadly framed. Article 4 says that governments shouldn't pass measures that interfere with or diminish investment, trade or labour mobility. Well, there's little that a government does that doesn't impact the market, whether it's land-use planning or an environmental standard or a license to develop the tar sands. Virtually all of that has a huge impact on the market. Suddenly, under TILMA all that's fair game for challenge by individuals or companies

based in BC and vice versa."

Complaints would be brought before an arbitral tribunal which has the power to award monetary awards of up to \$5 million.

In his opinion, Shrybman argues the legislation violates the constitution by addressing matters of inter-provincial trade, which falls under federal jurisdiction; limiting the exercise of legislative and governmental authority by imposing financial penalties on the province for the lawful actions of governments and other public bodies; harming judicial independence by handing powers from courts to ad hoc tribunals; giving cabinet the right to nullify decisions of the legislature; and violating privacy and privilege by authorizing the collection and disclosure of information, including personal information and privileged communication.

Shrybman says that if passed the legislation could be challenged following a ruling, but given its constitutional implications a group or individual could claim public interest standing and bring the matter before the courts now.

"It's really quite astonishing that it could happen and that it could get this far without it provoking a real storm of protest and controversy. It's a disturbing kind of indictment of how much attention people are paying to issues like this, even though they speak very directly to the basic building blocks of a democratic society." ▼

## BIKE MONTH

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

things—those things are very important—but how do you get that out there and how do you get people engaged and committed to wanting to do something that they already know is fun and rewarding, but it's that commitment to get them out there?"

The answer Turnbull and other Bike Month organizers came up with was to simply create venues where cyclists of all kinds—from committed commuters to track racers to timid first-timers with a new cruiser—can come together to celebrate and discuss the varied and vibrant bike culture in the city.

"That's why the core of Bike Month is actually arts and celebration, creativity, different bike cultures—plural—coming together and being celebrated ... and various events where you can talk about different things and be in a space where there are a lot of bikes," Turnbull continues. "Because without a feeling that you're doing something together with other people it's your own motivation, it's just me getting up in the morning and not turning the keys to the car. So, what's going to invigorate people—that's the whole celebratory angle to it."

The result is a calendar (see sidebar) full of social events designed to simply give cyclists a reason to stop and spend some time with like-minded people.

"We like to have the bike-to-work breakfasts and mocktails in a place where a lot of cyclists go by, so we do them in and around the High Level Bridge. It's a great way to introduce

people to the community of cyclists because people on their commute stop and you can see it on their face, they're just so pleased to hang out."

Turnbull is also excited about the increasing focus on the arts the festival is embracing, including artistic endeavours such as a writing competition about cyclists' experiences with cars, a writing circle focusing on penning odes to the bicycle and a workshop on making jewelry from used bike parts hosted by Harcourt House.

**IT'S ALL** an attempt to bring a social aspect to what can often be a solitary experience, which Turnbull hopes will give individual cyclists the energy to keep pushing for the changes in their personal lives which will make them more likely to keep pedalling.

"I'll hear once in a while 'Oh yeah, I just keep on my boss about having a shower at work.' People are talking, there's an awareness that work is much more satisfying and much more productive if you have some exercise. So they're pushing that on their employers and saying, 'I want safe lockups for my bike, I want a shower, I want a locker, I want somewhere to store my suit jacket and that sort of thing'" she says.

"And that's really wonderful to hear—when the bike cultures have upped the ante enough that they're visual, even if you only read about cyclists doing these wonderful things in the newspaper, you still feel a part of it. And so you feel like, 'Yeah, I'm part of a whole and this is the right thing to do and I'm going to take some action at work or I'm going to insist to my partner that I need those extra 15 minutes to get ready to get on my bike,' or what have you."

Those little initiatives, in turn, make the switch to cycling easier for other people.

"There's a normalcy about commuting. Once you have it in your life and you're used to packing up in a certain way and you get around the sweatiness by changing at work or what have you, there's quite a normalcy and an everyday-ness about it. It isn't strange or foreign and it certainly isn't dangerous and it isn't for a fringe crowd, there are lots of different subcultures within the community. It's really good to be able to touch base with all kinds of people doing all kinds of cycling in different ways, then it's so normal."

While Bike Month is heavy on creating a sense of community and a celebratory atmosphere around the bicycle, ultimately it's also about making fundamental changes in how people get around and how the city is designed.

"I think there's definitely a political aspect, because we're trying to forward the use of the bicycle. Just by creating a feeling of larger community, if you have that feeling of togetherness then there's a propensity to work together in the future and build up new and exciting events and facilities in the future," she says.

"We're trying to overcome barriers in our mentality to become a big city, to become a big livable city. We've started to take a trajectory around that with city planning and with non-profit groups and other groups coming together to build cycling culture so that we can have more people on the streets, and there's nothing better for the city than that." ▼

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- 4) Dangerous feat. Akon  
Kardinal Offishall
- 5) Bleeding Love  
Leona Lewis
- 6) Love In This Club feat. Young Jeezy  
Usher
- 7) Like Me  
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## Proposed coal strip mine has worried residents getting VOCAL

CLAYTON MARSDEN / vocalalberta@gmail.com

As early as the middle of June 2008, Sherritt is expected to file application for a coal strip mine at Dodds-Roundhill near Tofield, a small town of just under 2000 residents that has been a hub for numerous generations-old family farms for much of its nearly 100-year history.

The proposed Dodds-Roundhill mine, barely an hour's drive from downtown Edmonton, would be the largest strip mine in Canada, and would eat up many of these farms. In its projected 40-year lifespan, the strip mine and its associated coal gasification plants would also require nine million cubic metres of water annually and would create thou-

sands of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

This is not the first time that a strip mine has been proposed for the area. Some 30 years ago, farmers in the area managed to stop a proposal for a similar project. The current process is now in its second stage, with what amounts to a defining of terms taking place last year. Although Sherritt has not yet filed application with the ERCB—and no official action can take place until that happens—there are fears that once the application is made, many of the questions regarding local and regional impacts will not be included in the review process. Cumulative effects of development in the region

may be disregarded for a more finite view to this project, and definitions of who is adversely affected may be limited and hard to challenge, thereby minimizing effective opposition from all concerned parties.

Despite plans to bring in the water required for the project (including a proposal to pipe in greywater from Edmonton, which fails to account for the impact to the North Saskatchewan River basin downstream), it is presupposed that some of the water may be obtained from the area aquifers themselves since such a large volume of water will be required for a project of this size. Nearby Beaverhill Lake, which

provides feeding and resting habitat for over 50 000 shorebirds each year, is already suffering lower water levels, meaning there is essentially no useable water to be found locally.

There are also concerns about what effect the mine will have on the aquifers serving the area and its farms. One of these, lying above the coal seam, would be removed to access the coal, and concerns about the lower aquifer have not yet been assuaged by any reasonable study.

Although the option of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration underground is being sold as a viable option to deal with greenhouse gases created by the project, it is a largely unproven technology which has yet to answer concerns regarding long-term seepage into the atmosphere, the potential damage to aquifers or the amount of land that would be disturbed.

Economically, the product itself is becoming more and more unsellable in our largest market, the United States. Environmental policies which started in California are now in various stages of being adopted in more than 20 states and at the federal level. These policies rate energy sources not only by the emissions released at the destination but also by the emissions that were released in their production, quickly making a dinosaur of our fossil-fuel technology.

IN TOFIELD, as within some other nearby municipalities, the attitude is more mixed towards the mine, as the development has been sold as an opportunity for economic development and increased property values. But even here there are concerns about who will be left with the bill for needed infrastructure and the social implications on what has traditionally been an agriculture-based community.

Benefits for farmers would only go to those who sell their land for the actual

mine site and plant sites. Others on the periphery of these sites would likely see their land values go down dramatically. One does not have to go very far to understand these concerns. Just 20 kilometres away, the town of Ryley is home to a landfill set to receive garbage from as far away as Ontario, and land values on the periphery of the disposal site are already almost worthless.

There are few that would argue that prosperity and progress aren't good things, but many in the area are wondering whether this development is worth the cost to farmland, the environment and the area's rich local heritage. Yet it is questionable how much real planning, consultation and consideration is being given to these issues, and how much will merely be left to afterthought.

There are alternatives, though; given time and investigation, they may constitute a win for the farms and communities, and even for Sherritt. Some in the area have a vision of Tofield and area being the site of green energy research and development. The very concept answers to energy needs and investment potential, and is a forward-thinking direction that may actually help our province break free from the boom-and-bust cycle of our oil-based economy, provide a more tenable model for sustainable growth and help install us as energy leaders for the future.

VOCAL, the Voice of Community and Land, is a local society that is lobbying against the proposed strip mine and hoping to explore more sustainable options for their community. To find out more about the society, become a member or get involved, the group can be contacted at vocalalberta@gmail.com. ▽

Clayton Marsden is an associate member of VOCAL and a political, social and environmental activist.

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# Anti-immigrant violence in South Africa has roots

COMMENT

## DYER STRAIGHT

It was looking ugly there for a few days, with mobs of South Africans in townships around Johannesburg randomly murdering several dozen "foreigners" (migrants from other African countries) and injuring several hundred. But now President Thabo Mbeki has acted decisively: he has announced the establishment of a panel of inquiry into the violence. That should fix it.

Just in case he gets impatient while waiting for the panel's report, however, I can tell him what it will say—or at least, what it should say. It should say that the root problem was his own government's "non-interventionist" policy on immigration, its refusal to control or even count the number of people arriving in South Africa from other African countries.

The mere fact that the commonly used estimate is "three to five million" illegal immigrants says it all: the authorities really have no idea how many foreigners are in South Africa. But the higher estimate is probably closer to the truth, for some four million people have left Zimbabwe alone to seek work abroad, and almost all of them have gone to South Africa.

This "open borders" non-policy had high motives. Many of South Africa's current leaders are men and women who spent decades in exile during the fight against apartheid, and the migrants come mostly from the countries that gave them shelter at that time. How can they turn away people from those countries—from Zimbabwe, above all—now that the shoe is on the other foot?

It is an honourable sentiment, but more easily experienced if, like South Africa's current leaders, you lead a secure life in one of the first northern suburbs of Johannesburg. If you happen to live in Alexandra township (not all that far from those pleasant suburbs) amidst garbage and violence and chronic poverty, and you don't have a job, it's a little harder to access such noble emotions—because one-tenth of the people in the country are illegal immigrants, and lots of them do have jobs.

None of this justifies murder, but it was incredibly foolish to assume that he could just let foreigners flood into the country and not expose them to a popular backlash. The South African media are filled with self-flagellating editorials

that all basically ask, "What kind of people are we if we can behave like this?" The answer is: not saintly inhabitants of some imagined "rainbow nation" that has risen above the normal human plane, just ordinary people under pressure and behaving badly.

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN POOR** have been amazingly patient as year after year went by—14 years now since the end of apartheid—when so little has changed for the better in their lives. The black poor still loyally vote for the African National Congress (ANC), but their anger was going to burst out somewhere or other, sooner or later. By holding the door open to so many illegal immigrants, the government has guaranteed that they would be the primary target.

Maybe this is some Machiavellian plan to divert popular anger from the government itself, but probably not. It's just that the leaders don't see what has been happening to ordinary people. How else could Thabo Mbeki go on defending Robert Mugabe, the destroyer of Zimbabwe, year after year, when Mugabe's misdeeds were the main reason that this enormous wave of illegal immigrants struck South Africa?

Justice Malala, whose column appears in *The Times* (the online version of South Africa's *Sunday Times*), nailed it on Monday when he wrote: "(Our) people are behaving like barbarians because the ANC has failed—despite numerous warnings—to act on burning issues that are well known for having sparked similar eruptions across the globe."

"The Mbeki government's refusal to even acknowledge the crisis in Zimbabwe has resulted in as many as 3 million Zimbabweans walking the streets of South Africa."

"Mbeki's resolute refusal to address the crisis in Zimbabwe—and his friendship with President Robert Mugabe—has brought them here. His block-headedness is directly responsible for the eruption of xenophobia."

Such plain talk is not "blaming the victim." It is recognizing realities, which is the first step towards addressing them. And where the despairing poor of South Africa should be addressing their anger is not at helpless Zimbabweans, but at the president who let this human catastrophe happen. ▽

*Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.*

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# Provincial framework welcomed, but implementation a concern

AMANTHA POWER / [samantha@vucweekly.com](mailto:samantha@vucweekly.com)

One of former premier Ralph Klein's parting statements as he left office was an admission that his government had no plan or the province's growth. And with the increasing social, economic and environmental pressures of rapid oil and gas development, it's easy to see the evidence. It's this reality that has prompted a new framework by the provincial government, developed to create a strategy for coordinated land use across the province.

The Land-use Framework, the result of consultations involving non-governmental, aboriginal, municipal and business organizations, is the direct responsibility of Ted Morton's Ministry of Sustainable Resources, but involves coordination with nearly every provincial ministry in some capacity.

The strategy deals with several contentious questions, including the reso-

## LAND-USE FRAMEWORK

lution of surface and subsurface rights—an ongoing issue between landowners and the provincial government—as well as guidelines for “environmentally sound economic activity.”

Rick Schneider, a senior policy analyst with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, believes Albertans need to pay attention to the document because of its broad impact across social and environmental issues.

“Alberta is currently the greenhouse gas capital of Canada, the continuously rising tax rates in Edmonton, the infrastructure problems—it has everything to do with the way we manage land,” Schneider says.

The Land-use Framework is an attempt to make up for the fact that a provincial strategy for coordinated land use has not existed since a vague attempt to divide the province into settled and forested land over 50 years ago.

“Alberta has really proceeded on a laissez-faire approach to planning,” explains Jodie Hierlmeier of the Environmental Law Centre. “We’ve had a fairly small population, a large amount of resources and a fair size land base, so the government’s approach to development has been that it can occur at any time at any place.”

Hierlmeier says that population growth and the depletion of our resources have made the new plan a necessity.

“We’re seeing a lot more land-use conflict, so the time for this to happen is now. Perhaps we’ve been waiting too long for a tipping point,” she says. “The

document is important for this reason, as the government acknowledges that we can’t have development anytime anywhere. It’s just not sustainable.”

Over the years there have been attempts to create land, air and water strategies, but most have been shelved or left to collect the dust of the legislative library as political will waned. But Hierlmeier has higher hopes about the new framework.

“I’d like to be cautiously optimistic that this document will make a difference. We’ve basically been operating with no plan to manage growth at all for the past few years. So the fact they’re looking at a plan is a positive step.”

**WITH THE TIMELINES** for implementation still four years down the road, Schneider cautions that the framework isn’t a done deal just yet. Having watched the government’s failure to implement the forest conservation strategy, Schneider hopes to see some serious initiatives by the ministry.

“Implementation is the weak part in the strategy. The next six months to a year will tell us how serious the government is,” he says.

“A legal foundation will be critical if we want action and not simply a debating exercise, which happened with the forest conservation strategy.”

Morris Seiferlinger, a spokesperson with the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development is confident action will occur on the strategy.

“This has been a government initiative from the get-go. There were seven ministers who have co-lead responsibility on the framework,” he says. “The other thing the framework talks about is a cabinet committee to ensure the strategy is implemented.”

The government has already started a consultation processes on the finalized document, which was released May 21.

For now, reaction to the framework has been quite positive, but Hierlmeier suspects that won’t always be the case.

“Once we see the details of how it will unfold in legislation, I think then we’ll see more critiques coming across sectors,” she predicts.

While much of the document calls for conservation strategies and for limits and targets to be placed to ensure proper management of resources, it avoids calls to actually slow growth.

“This is a way to manage growth in a way that we are not stopping it. There will be limits placed on growth in certain areas, which we haven’t seen in the past,” says Schneider, who is broadly supportive of the document. “But if you look at the language in the document, it doesn’t reflect a change in the government’s view that growth in the province is going to be slowed in any way. I think that signals the government is staying on the same path.”



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11 am Pride Centre Family Pride Branch  
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# Time to ban pesticides

**WELL, WELL, WELL**

In my email box yesterday, news that the Canadian Cancer Society is calling for a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides in our yards and in all public spaces (including a phase-out on golf courses) made my day, though I quickly reminded myself that it's likely a bit of a way between this and city council actually banning them. It's a long way, and a longer way yet before products are actually gone from store shelves and neighbour's storage sheds.

We all like weed-free lawns, especially if we don't have to get down on our knees and pull them ourselves, but analyses like the recent one made by Jim Hole aren't exactly helpful. (He experimented with perfumes on plants and facetiously concluded that pesticides are less toxic than perfume and then recommended consulting with those trained in safe pesticide use before using. But when did it become smart to start trusting industry insiders?) Besides, those wearing perfume aren't spraying it all over the lawns our children are playing on, to get into the air and water we all share.

The truth is that these chemicals have quite persuasively been linked to a long list of cancers. They're responsible for the 6000 Canadians that suffer acute pesticide poisoning every year. Capital Health doesn't recommend their use, and for those determined not to part with them suggests letting your neighbours know in advance, but has anyone ever done this?

Pesticides have now been banned in 135 Canadian communities and all but two major Canadian cities, leaving Edmonton with the distinction of being Canada's largest city with nothing in the works. Calgary's ahead of us on this one—they've got a draft bylaw ready to go to city council in July pending the approval of an environmental policy group.

But what's the point? We want to hang on to our reputation as pol-

luting rednecks? And what's with the Cross Cancer Institute using them on their grounds to save a few trees?

**BUT THREE CHEERS** for retailers proactively removing the products from their shelves—Home Depot plans to have a Canada-wide removal to be completed by the end of 2009, and Wal-Mart and Canadian Tire plan to have them off at least Ontario store shelves by the end of this year.

And it's not like we have no options. Mulching the clippings is easier than bagging them, and aerating and over-seeding to keep the lawn thick and healthy will keep weeds mostly at bay (kind of like the host environment of our bodies, when optimally healthy, can keep the bad bugs mostly at bay).

We'd do well to remember that leaded gasoline was once also considered safe by those profiting from sales, and dig in our heels with those still telling us not to worry our pretty little heads about our children playing on treated lawns. We need to tell those who dismiss the precautionary principle as naïve and frivolous to back off—and to go get to know someone with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or leukemia or any of the long list of associated illnesses and see if they can look them in the eye and tell them it's too bad we don't know beyond a shadow of doubt exactly which of our environmental poisons stressed their body to the point of illness.

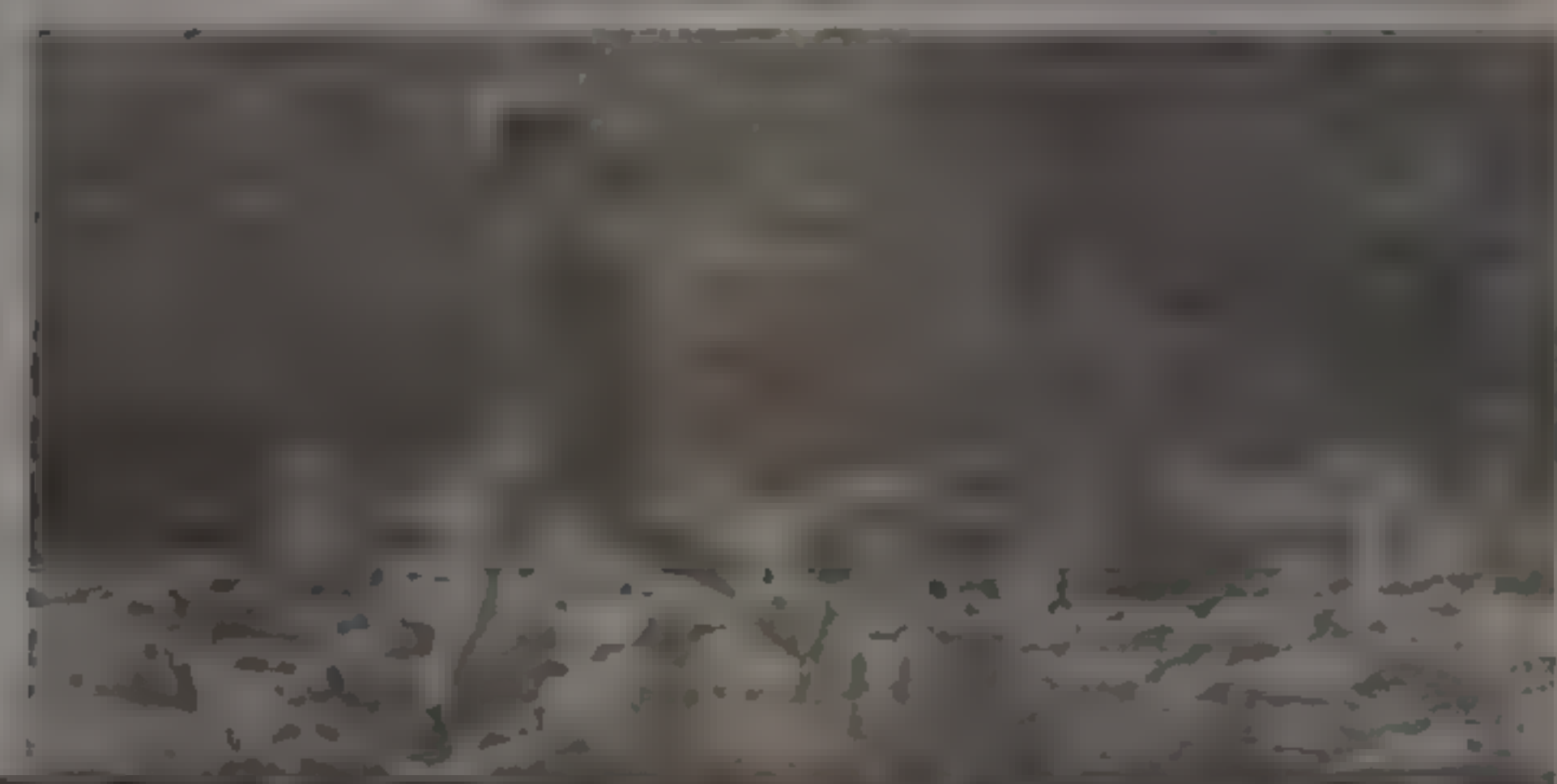
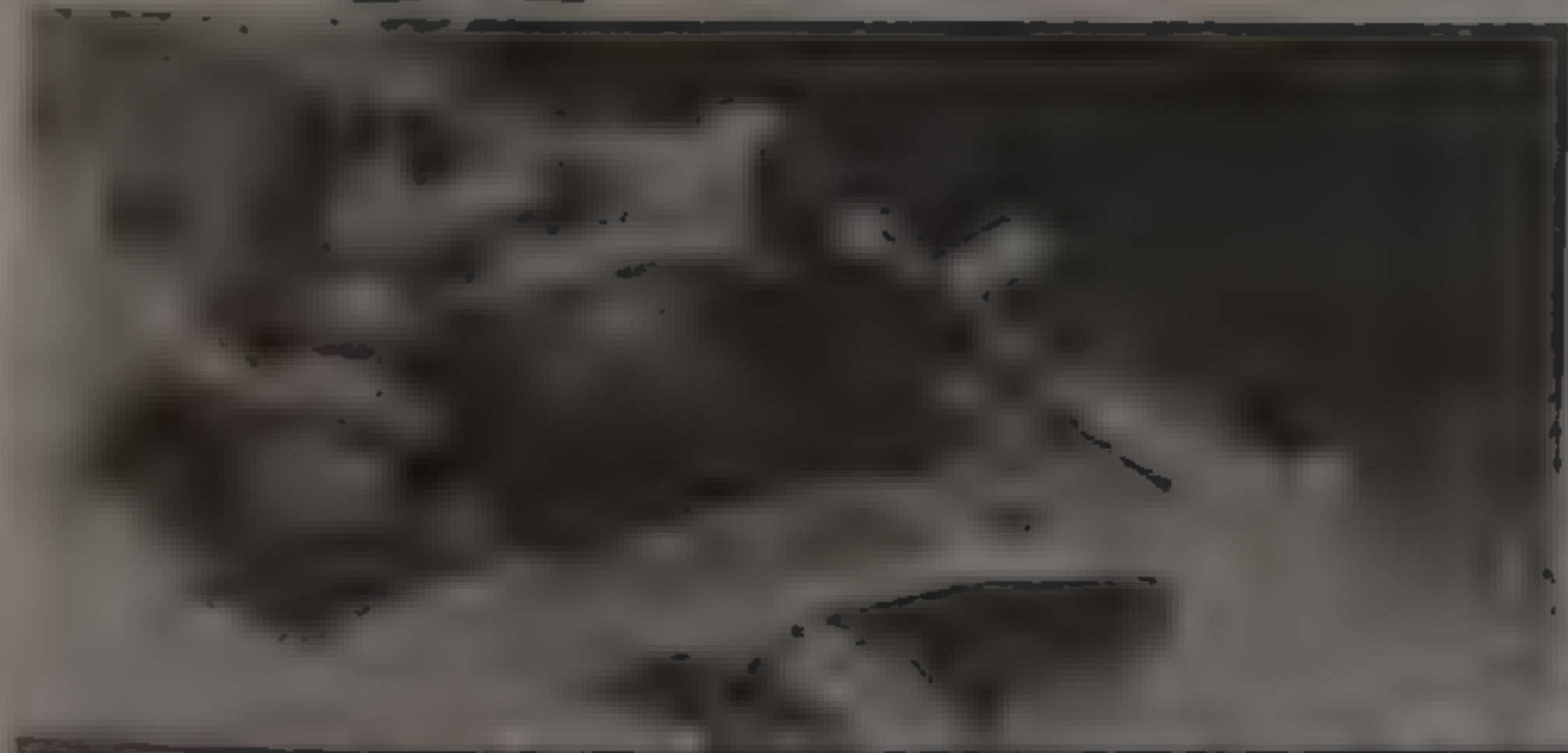
Given that almost 90 per cent of Albertans support a ban on for-vanity pesticide use, that physicians have spoken out strongly against their use, that the Canadian Medical Association has called for a country-wide ban and that in 2001 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld a Hudson town council bylaw against pesticide use, thereby paving the way for other Canadian municipalities, I'm not sure what we're waiting for.

It's time to pick up our phones and let our councillors know we want to see this happen in our city. And of course there's still room on the petition being circulated by Pesticide Free Edmonton, which you can read and sign online at [gopetition.com/online/10190.html](http://gopetition.com/online/10190.html).



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# This week in games

GAMES

INFINITE LIVES

GABRIEL ZENKO

infinite.lives@vancouverweekly.com

MAY 25, 8:23 AM—THE DREAM WORLD

I'm standing out on a wet playing field, dim in the overcast, surrounded by grim concrete apartment blocks. There's a TV screen hanging in front of me, flashing bright visuals, and a controller of some sort in my hands. Someone is speaking from somewhere behind me and off to my left.

"This is the most recent remake we published." The voice is masculine, young, deep, assured. "It's *Pele's Soccer*."

On the screen, intricately detailed soccer dudes meet each other on a high-definition pitch. There's explosions and sparkles, particle effects, fireworks. Every now and then, one or another player on each three-man squad will be wreathed in flames, which I suppose must indicate awesomeness ...

... except it doesn't. Nothing changes. Mechanically, the game comprises two "teams"—rigidly fixed three-point triangular formations—battling for control of the vectors of a "ball" whose visual appearance is accurately modelled to the photon level but whose physics is well within the simple-Newtonian confines of a Grade 6 textbook.

"This ... this is exactly like the Atari game," I say.

"Of course," the voice replies. "*Pele's Soccer* was wicked."

"No one will buy this in the 21st century."

"Why wouldn't they? Most games are nothing more than *Robotron* or *Pac-Man* dressed up in supercomputer graphics and 'narratives' straight out of a junior-high creative writing assignment. And check out the numbers."

The game is replaced onscreen by a spreadsheet, playtime data on every game I've ever touched in my life.

"See? Historically, you've put more than 20 times the hours into *Pele's Soccer* than you've put into, say, *Grand Theft Auto IV*. That says 'hit' to me."

I can't argue with the data. The voice continues.

"Now, wait'll you get a load of our next Atari remake: *Super Challenge Foot-*

The screen disappears, and I find myself lined up on the playfield in scrimmage formation with shadowy figures that shift identities: parents, friends, relatives, ex-girlfriends. We're on defense, another side of shadows opposite us with my brother at QB.

The floodlights bang on. A synthesized whistle sounds. The glowing shoebox is snapped. Old instincts return, and I know what I have to do.

Turning away from the line of scrimmage, I sprint back toward my own goal line. After 30 yards the world shifts and warps, and suddenly I'm teleported behind my brother's blockers, charging straight for the back of his head.

There's the familiar digital sound of impact—BLEE-ORRT!—and it's a textbook come-from-behind Miracle Sack.

"No fair," my brother cries through a mouthful of pixelated turf. "That's

cheating!"

"If it's in the game," I say, getting a little extra shove in as I feel myself waking up, "it's not cheating."

MAY 17, 2:41 PM—CHINOOK MALL, CALGARY

I'm sitting in the sun, on the sidewalk outside the Sephora cosmetic shop, waiting for my lady. The fruit salad desert-buffet smellscape of the place had been giving me a headache—grapefruit, lemongrass, mango extract, chocolate, crème brûlée ... the beautymarketing brain trust banking on women's need to smear themselves with food?

The people-watching out here is too depressing, so to pass the time I zone out on a cell-phone game I downloaded for some (drunk? bored?) reason a couple of weeks ago: *Surviving High School*.

Honestly, this seems like a pretty easy high school to survive. Go to class, answer some trivia questions now and then, flirt with girls, pass notes, try out for the football team. When I started playing, I tried to add some drama by selecting the only Black avatar available; your character's parents are whiter-than-white no matter what you pick, so I've been making my own dramatic subtext, the struggle of an adopted African child to find an identity in suburbia. Still, the only moment of the game that even hints that "surviving high school" might not be a given was when my pal Tony ended up comatose in the hospital with a football-practice injury.

Fuckin' Tony ... ain't it just like that knucklehead to get concussed on the same day I'd arranged a date with Raven, the school's token goth. And with a History final coming up, no less. I can't afford to lose his precious Free Points, though ... I pace the hospital corridor, watching the clock, hoping Tony's parents read my agitation as concern for their baby boy rather than eagerness to get out of there and get me a piece of pale pussy ...

Finally, Tony's eyes flutter open. See me, he wells up with tears. "D-Dendou," he whispers. "You're a good friend, sticking by me."

"Hey, someone's gotta look after your dumb ass, buddy," I say, chucking his shoulder. "Now, you just rest up and see you tomorrow, OK?" Exchanging hugs with his grateful parents, I book it over to the multiplex. I'm not too late. Raven's waiting and looking particularly moody. I can see it in the way she's crossing her arms: tonight's the night to make my move and bump her Love Meter up to Level Four. The "D" in History will be worth it ...

Tire-squeal and horn-blare cut the parking-lot near miss jolt me back into reality. Dismissing *Surviving High School*, I check the time; I've been out here for half an hour, too long for even the most dedicated browser of Body Butter and Miracle In A Jar. When she said "outside," did my girl think I meant outside-outside or inside-outside? I find her inside-inside, sitting by the T-Rex made of car parts, examining her purchases.

"Hi!" she smiles; "Where were you?"

I'm too embarrassed to answer her honestly. ▀



# Ragazzi's great, if you can get the right waitress

JAN HOSTYM / jan@vancouverweekly.com

I get it. I get what it's like to be a harried waitress, catering to the fluctuating whims of finicky eaters and demanding diners. I get the stress, I get the frustration, I get the intense urge to scream at the top of your lungs. I get it because that's what put me through university. But I also know how understanding people can be, how just a few words can turn imminent disaster into something much less ominous.

"Sorry"; "We're running a bit behind"; "It'll be just a few more minutes": all are words that can make a big difference. Clares, sighs and indifference will not. If those few words remain forever locked inside a pursed mouth, disaster can and likely will happen.

Why the rant? Unfortunately, a waitress having a particularly bad day changed what could have been an exceptional dining experience into something less than pleasant. Which is too bad, because **Ragazzi Bistro Italiano** ("Pizza Boys" to some) isn't a bad restaurant. In fact, to some, it is the place to go for delicious, thin-crust, hand-tossed pizza.

The night in question started off innocently enough. We decided to go out for a family dinner, one that would not only satisfy my pizza-crazed kids but also offer a bit more than the standard pizza joint: more ambiance, more selection, more personality and, of course, better food. Friends of ours are Pizza Boys (they still don't call it Ragazzi) fanatics, so we decided to check it out.



**FROM THE OUTSIDE**, it certainly looks like a typical pizza joint: plain and simple, blending into the concrete parking lot of the strip mall it calls home. The name is fancy though—Ragazzi Bistro Italiano. Four brothers opened the restaurant seven years ago and named it Pizza Boys, for obvious reasons. But the name implied it was just a pizza place, not somewhere to go to satisfy a craving for good, authentic Italian cuisine. So last year the name was officially changed to Ragazzi Bistro Italiano.

Ragazzi still means "boys" in Italian, but adds some zing and mystique. And once we left the bleak, concrete parking lot and entered the warm, aromatic bistro, Ragazzi did seem more appropriate. As we walked in, my eyes were drawn to the back wall. It's lined with brick and has a semi-circle "window"

ITALIAN

OPEN MON - THU (11 AM - 10 PM)

FRI (11 AM - 12 AM); SAT (4:30 PM - 10 PM)

**RAGAZZI BISTRO ITALIANO**

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in it, which teased us with a peek at the pizza chefs and a glimpse of the kitchen. A blackboard hanging nearby listed the pizza of the day—tuna, red onion and capers—adding a homey touch. Definitely more welcoming than just a pizza joint.

We were quickly seated in the half-full restaurant and, eager to quiet our ravenous kids, wasted no time in scanning the menu. An order for a milk (\$1.50), orange juice (\$2), soda water with lemon (\$1.50) and a Coors Light (\$4.75) was quickly dispatched. Although the pastas sounded tempting, it was the many pizzas scattered

around the room, sitting like kings atop their pedestal platters, that won our vote. Two 14-inch pizzas—one cheese (\$13.50) and one with green pepper and mushrooms (\$18.00)—were ordered, along with two bowls of minestrone soup (\$5 each). The kids were especially excited at the prospect of watching the kitchen hand-toss the pizzas, something the menu encouraged. Our waitress said she'd come and get them when it was time.

In the meantime, our drinks arrived and my soda water had only a tiny slice of lemon. I politely asked our waitress for another, when she had time. It never arrived. Not a big deal, so I let it go. But then our minestrone soup arrived in fabulous, inviting white bowls, minus the fresh buns promised on the menu. We requested the buns and waited. The soup smelled amazing but, as we are both dippers, we held off for a bit and waited some more. Still no buns. Another request and a snap in reply. We also inquired about when the pizza tossing was going to take place. "We'll come and get you" was the response.

Buns finally came, but we had to ask for butter—three times. The once warm buns were now cold. Oh well, we didn't need the extra carbs any way. The soup was delicious; the broth was full of flavour, the chunks of veggies and beans plentiful without being heavy and overwhelming, but also slightly cold by this time.

There was still no mention of pizza tossing, so I made another inquiry and got a sigh and the report that our pizzas were made, but the kids could watch someone else's being made. Not

quite as exciting, but it would have to do. Partway through the soup, our pizza came. The dilemma: eat hot pizza and forsake the rest of the rapidly cooling soup or finish the soup and eat slightly cool pizza. The soup was amazing, so we decided to finish it.

**WE WERE SHORT** a couple of plates, which we requested along with parmesan and hot peppers. The plates arrived only after the three reminders to our waitress went unheeded and one of the brothers saw our distress and intervened. I got up and retrieved the parmesan and hot peppers myself.

The pizzas were delicious and boasted the best crust we've had in a long time. Tangy sauce, loads of mushrooms and just enough gooey cheese made ours hard to resist. Had we eaten it when it was hot, it would have been even better.

As for Ragazzi's credit, the owners delivered a complimentary tiramisu. Although it was delicious (according to my husband) and a thoughtful gesture everyone just wanted to get the bill and go. When our waitress did deliver our bill, there was no eye contact, no thank you, nothing. At any point, just a few words of explanation from her would have gone a long way toward changing our opinion, but we just felt hostility. And she never did come get the kids so they could watch the pizza tossing.

Sorry Ragazzi, as wonderful as the food was, the experience was not. So go, enjoy, but beware of waitresses in grumpy moods. Seek out one of the owners though, and you just may have a new favourite pizza place. ▽



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## Three Amigos keeps it all in the family

ERIN MIKALUK / erin@vuweekly.com

I come from a family of three daughters who all have our differences—one of us is crafty with her hands, the middle child is a non-stop ball of energy and me, I'm Little Miss Social—but together we make an incredible team. I've always known that a restaurant would figure out our triple-threat formula, and **The Three Amigos** seems to be the place.

You'd never know it as you approach the restaurant at the end of Duggan strip mall, but inside is a successful business run by three brothers

MEXICAN

MON - THU (11 AM - 9 PM); FRI (11 AM - 10 PM)  
SAT (12 PM - 9:30 PM); SUN (1:30 PM - 8 PM)  
**THE THREE AMIGOS**  
4035 - 106 ST, 490.6394

who know how to cook Mexican—and they should, as they learned all they know from their Mom. Open seven days a week for the past two years, Three Amigos offers dine-in, take-out, delivery and catering service—and the brothers do it all by themselves

My first impression of The Three Amigos was a bit of a shock. I'd been musing about making reservations for my party of four and was concerned that we would have to wait for a table. Stepping inside the one-room space no bigger than your average Subway restaurant, I think they would've laughed if I'd made the phone call.

Yet, unlike a Subway, the room had a life of its own. Hot pink, jungle green and vibrant orange splashed across walls decorated with large, red-bearded sombreros. Upbeat salsa and merengue

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The Spanish equivalent of the dish found from the television series. In some restaurants, it may have seemed like it was only served to the tropical calming effect was immediate and we settled into one of two plastic booths.

"Did you want some menus?" one of the brothers asked, peering over the bar. The grumbling of our stomachs offered a clear response, and he handed us our laminated dinner choices for our perusal. We ordered a round of Jarritos, flavourful soda imported from Mexico (\$2.49). I'd never tasted a Guava fruit, but the pink Guava soda served in an old-fashioned glass bottle was refreshing, sweet and tropically yummy.

Chips and cheese (\$3.99) seemed an obvious choice for an appetizer, and we ordered two. The triangular tortilla chips were light and crispy, and smothered in white cheddar cheese. For a cheese lover like me, it was pure heaven. We scooped up globs of home-made salsa with each bite, but the star of the show was the creamy guacamole. The beautiful blend of fluffy avocado was the best guacamole I had every tasted.

**THE STRATEGY** with the entrees was to try a bit of everything, and luckily the menu was quite accommodating in that regard: we zeroed in on the Ultimate Amigo (\$17.99), a sampler of all seven exotic-sounding dishes on the menu. We couldn't wait to indulge in our Mexican dining experience, and didn't have to wait long.

It took about 10 minutes before a large platter filled with rice, beans, tortillas, more of that incredible guacamole and every other Mexican dish I could've dreamed up arrived. The problem now was where to begin. My eyes darted to one of the only foods I could easily identify, the empanada. Since I was sharing with my husband, I sliced it in half and dug in.

Light and crisp and definitely home made, the empanada transported me back to my time in Mexico. A staple dish down south, empanadas are similar to a pizza pocket in shape

and can be stuffed with everything from potatoes to chicken to veggies. This one contained a zesty combination of shredded chicken and cheese, with a golden pastry exterior that offered the perfect crunch.

Up next was the quesadilla, a thin corn-flour shell folded and stuffed with mozzarella cheese. Salsa and guacamole added spice, but it seemed to lack substance, and I wished it would've contained more than cheese.

The tamales, soft corn patties filled with spiced chicken, wrapped in a corn husk and then steamed, were incredible. The steaming had made the corn tender and mushy, while the chicken packed just the right amount of punch. Definitely one of my favourites from the sampler, so much so that I made a mental note to order an entire dish the next time I returned. The chicken faltas, crispy corn tortillas topped with chicken breast, lettuce and melted cheese, were also a fan favourite.

Tacos dorados, deep-fried corn-rolled tortillas stuffed with chicken, potato, spicy Mexican rice and refried beans the colour of eggplant helped to round out our Mexican dining experience, and I leaned back in the booth with a sigh of contentment.

**DESPITE** a decidedly full sensation, I couldn't resist the desserts. I decided to order the equivalent of my favourite Mexican entrée, the Empanada de Pina (\$4.99). The light and flaky pocket, stuffed with pineapple, deep-fried to a golden brown and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar, was pure delight, and an excellent finish to our spicy dinner.

Authentic, home-made food is such a treat when it is done well, and each dish from The Three Amigos oozed authenticity. The three brothers have put their talents together to create culinary magic, and for a mere \$65.34, including GST and tip for four people, we got the chance to experience it. After the Ultimate Amigo, we now know our favourite dishes and can't wait to return to try them again. ♥

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# Ruamit is worth the drive ... and the wait

ELLA JAMESON / ella@vancouverweekly.com

There's a certain Thai restaurant in Edmonton that always does well in the Golden Fork Awards, despite being continuously and mercilessly panned by every restaurant review website that serves our region. In other words, people who have actually eaten there don't particularly like it.

I haven't been there myself, so I can't comment on the food at that particular eatery. I love Thai food, though, and I've found that Edmonton has some great choices when it comes to authentic Thai cuisine. Recently I found another local hot spot that had flown under my radar, but is now jostling to become my top pick for 2008.

**Ruamit Thai** isn't technically in Edmonton, it's in Sherwood Park, but for those on the east side of the city it's a quick jaunt down Wye Road for some spectacular Southeast Asian cuisine. My brother, his wife and I made the trek out on a quiet Saturday evening. We had reservations for 6 pm, and were immediately asked upon arrival if we did. The reason was obvious: 11 of the 12 tables at Ruamit Thai were already occupied. The place was hopping busy, and the sun was still three hours away from setting over the 'burbs. In the city, people weren't even getting dressed for dinner yet.

We made our way to our table near the back of the small strip mall restaurant and admired the artwork along the way. The walls were done in a deep terracotta red and the framed art lining the longest wall stood out royally. Large tapestries of typical sequined elephants embellished two prominent spots.

A family-run business, Ruamit prides itself on its homey, comfortable atmosphere. It was apparent early on, however, that service was going to be slow. When our server finally came to take our drink and appetizer order 20 minutes after we were seated, she apologized for the wait.

**THAI**  
MON - THU (4:30 PM - 9 PM)  
FRI - SAT (4:30 PM - 10 PM)  
**RUAMIT THAI**  
#5, 52 BRENTWOOD BLVD, SHERWOOD PARK  
421.0707

**WE ORDERED** a Ruamit Platter with three popular appetizers: chicken satay, fish cakes and beef spring rolls (\$14.95). Then, having already had plenty of time to peruse the menu, we decided it was best to place our entire order while we had the server's undivided attention.

We started with a double order of Kao Mun (coconut rice, \$5.50), and then added an order of Green Curry Chicken (\$12.95), an order of Garlic Pork (\$13.95) and an order of Pad Kee Mao (rice noodles with shrimp chicken and squid, \$14.95).

A separate wine menu had a limited but varied selection of reds and whites. There was no beverage menu, so we opted to just drink from the lemon-infused jug of water that was left on our table.

My brother, sister-in-law and I hadn't seen each other in over a month, so conversation flowed easily as we waited for our food. We watched as a plate of Pandan Chicken went by and immediately regretted not having ordered it. The table next to us assured us that the tender chicken wrapped in pandan leaves was delicious.

In fact, an entire meal could have been made from the appetizer menu. A bowl of Tom Yam Kai soup would have rounded that out nicely. Clearly we were going to have to come back to sample more choices.

A full 35 minutes passed before our appetizer platter arrived, with apologies from the kitchen. It was obvious they were overwhelmingly busy, and in addition to the dining room clientele it wasn't surprising to see that they had a booming take-out business as well.

Our plate had three of each appe-

tizer atop a bed of leafy lettuce. The chicken satay was tender and generous, but perhaps a little bland. A fresh peanut dipping sauce made up to that. The fish cakes were about the size of an Oreo cookie, and I didn't particularly like the texture, but my brother found them to be enjoyable. The spring rolls were packed with beef and vegetables and dangerously hot from the fryer. For me, they were the highlight of the platter.

**A HALF-HOUR LATER** the main dishes began to emerge from the kitchen starting with a large bowl of fragrant coconut rice. The green curry chicken was topped with broccoli, pepper mushrooms and Thai basil. The cur sauce was both sweet and hot, the magical Thai flavor that comes from using coconut milk.

Our garlic pork was steeped in tea of garlic sauce and served with julienne carrots and tiny broccoli florets. The potent garlic flavor made me grateful I didn't have a date for later in the evening. I absolutely loved the dish, but I knew it would likely come back to haunt me in the night.

The rice noodles were smothered in a fiery chili sauce and served with ample tender squid, jumbo prawns, chicken, mushrooms, baby corn and red peppers. It was eye-wateringly hot but unbelievably tasty. This dish got two out of three votes for our favorite.

We had chosen the right mix of dishes to cover the variety that makes Thai cuisine so enticing. Still, there were several others I would have liked to have tried, so I definitely have to return. Next time I'd be sure to either make an earlier reservation or try for the second seating.

Ruamit Thai has a fantastic lunch menu, but for the time being they aren't open for lunch. Staffing problems have them reducing their hours until they can provide full service.

If you go, make sure you have a reservation and remember that good things in life are worth waiting for.

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# Italians have some nice legs

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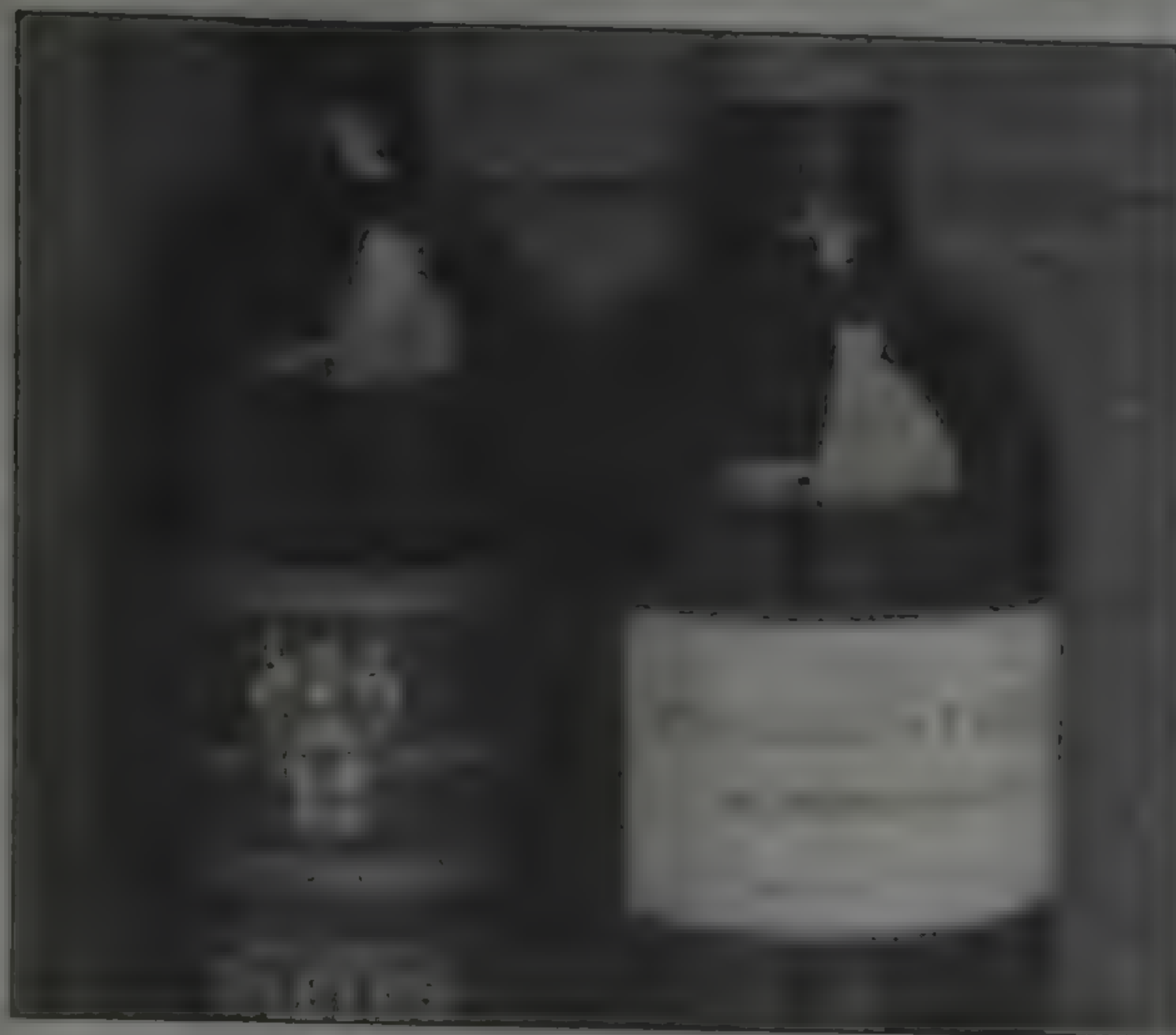
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Last weekend, my family and I decided to do pizza for dinner, so I decided I would see if some Italian wines matched up. This first one matched very well with rich tomato sauce.

This deep strawberry-red-coloured wine offered a well-rounded, smooth nose, with a wonderful bouquet. It seemed to almost envelope my senses without being at all overbearing.

Upon my first sip, I noticed some fairly strong tannins but even before I could swallow, they subsided. When they did let go, I found the fruit at the front quite refreshing: substantial but not excessive, with some noticeable hints of blackberry. The fruit oozed through the palate, lightening as it went disappearing to nothing by the end. Well not quite nothing, just a faint hint of the fruit as an after thought.

This was a very well-balanced wine with everything one should seek in good juice. It does let go after a while so only a short cellar is necessary and while young, it should stand up to and with fresh ingredients.



**TOMMASI POGGIO AL TUFO  
TUSCANA  
\$17**

This sharp cherry red wine has a warm, well-rounded nose. That said, there isn't much in the way of fruit on the nose, and only a hint of tannins. Not what I would expect from a 60 per cent Sangiovese/40 per cent Cabernet, but still pleasant.

My first sip really coated the tongue and

oozed throughout the palate. It was a very warm, even-tempered wine, that progressed very well through the palate. After swallowing, I was able to make out the flavours of the wine for quite a while. The tannins never overwhelmed the fruit, though the fruit was still vague, and a little hard to determine.

I found this to be a good bottle of wine, quite good for the price, but far from stellar overall. Still, at this price, a good bet. ▽

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**VUEWEEKLY**



# Woodblocks tell the story of Japan by going *Against the Grain*

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vancouverweekly.com

**A**gainst *The Grain*'s loaded with stories, multiple threads brought together by curator Jim Corrigan from a wider collection housed in the Print Study Centre, also under his care. At its core, *Against the Grain*'s somewhat a story of the collection as well as a historical survey of an art form, which reflects a cultural narrative of Japan. Within that, the show touches on stories of specific artists, themes and stylistic genres. Stories also are told by content—illustrated folktales, histories and other popular culture of the eras the exhibit spans, 1739 to now.

"We've developed the collection through gifts and trust funds, which the government used to match, with a focus on contemporary prints, many of them Japanese. About a quarter of those are historical," Corrigan explains.

Even before the Print Study Centre was established in 1996 as an accessible resource for scholars, artists, and locals (programs welcome the public), the collection it was to shelter was taking shape. He points to a set of prints featuring scenes from an enduring Japanese story, *The Tale of Genji*, written by a noblewoman in the imperial court around 1000 CE. "This portfolio came to us in 1985 in the original folder. There are about 50 prints in the whole portfolio, and we have six on display."

*Genji*, in general, is remarkable, possibly the first novel emerging in world literature. It's a sprawling, somewhat soap operatic saga that follows hundreds of characters through the hero's lifetime and begins to

PREVIEW

UNTIL SAT, JUN 28  
(THU 3 - 8 PM; FRI - SAT 12 - 5 PM)  
**AGAINST THE GRAIN**  
JAPANESE WOODBLOCK PRINTS FROM  
THE U OF A MUSEUM'S COLLECTION  
GALLERY A, TELUS CENTRE (111 ST & 87 AVE)

assert a fictional personal voice that had been lacking in mythic and folkloric works from various traditions, signaling not just a change in literature, but perhaps the ascendancy of the idea of a personal identity. *Genji*'s beloved by the Japanese as a well known story but also, justifiably, as a cultural achievement.

The version in the gallery dates from the 19th century, attempting to resurrect a story and an era that was quasi-legendary. The fine expressive lines, intricate patterns and richly colourful inks animate scenes from *Genji*'s life.

According to Corrigan, the *Genji* portfolio was a pivotal addition "When it came to us, I thought, 'yes, we're starting to get some meat. There's something we can work with in directing the collection.'"

**HE BUILT** the collection further, seeing a clearer articulation of purpose for the thousands of prints under his watchful eye. After a bequest of early to mid-20th century work, Corrigan says, "Finally I saw an exhibit emerging from years of purchases and gifts. There was almost a story of the history of Japanese prints. We have these wonderful contemporary prints—I wanted historical context for them."

Corrigan and members of his staff are beyond familiar with the collec-



tion. They're like zookeepers—they know their animals, have plans and dreams for them. The curator has a hard time looking at the show without having it whisper in his ear.

"This isn't a comprehensive or big exhibit, by any means. The more I get into them, the more I see the gaps," he laughs.

There's a sense of a history painted in broad strokes, but a viewer doesn't see gaps—just 70 or so gorgeous, intricate works underscored by a feeling of time and the collective efforts of craftspeople, artists and viewers moving culture and art forward. Accompanying write-ups are engaging, contextualizing the work well.

The earliest piece (dating from 1739) is a spare black ink print, bordered and set off centre, indicating it was once nestled in a book. Titled "Beauty," it features an elaborately coiffured and

wrapped woman. From that point of departure, Corrigan picks out influences that mirror changes in Japanese identity and the emergence of a middle class culture, beginning with Edo-era "floating world" images of people, legends, and scenery: ukiyo-e.

"This wasn't the high art at the time," Corrigan cautions. "Printing was a cooperative venture—you had illustrators, woodblock carvers, colourers—they'd punch these out, working in concert as fast as possible, producing thousands of images in a lifetime." (If that sounds like today's comics, they have an origin in the show, with manga's ancestors represented.) Corrigan has bared the process for us, including a source illustration and block that survives alongside a final print.

"Courtesans, geisha, kabuki actors—some were ads for theatre or

brothels, or lowbrow decorative nature scenes," Corrigan offers. "In the late 19th century, you see landscapes—people could be tourists in their country. And they were flooded with Western influence."

**THE INFLUENCE FLOWED** both ways, Corrigan asserts. "I don't think people have any idea of how much ukiyo-e influenced Western artists. Van Gogh and Monet collected them. The first exhibit in the West was 1806 in Paris—the heart of European art. You can see the influence—explosive colour, pattern, flat colour, heavy line—all right out of ukiyo-e."

Corrigan moves further into the gallery. "In Yokohama prints you see harbours and trains—these were the images people wanted. Imagery from the 1904 Russian war or Chinese war was propaganda, but also news, posted on billboards and handed out."

The explosion of the industrial age wasn't a strictly Western phenomenon: through the prints we see the advent of gaslights and electric street lights, coexisting with lush gardens and graceful paper screens.

Another seismic shift occurs in the last stretch of the show: in the '60s, printmaking solidifies into a truly modern art, beyond illustration and clearly authored, like hallucinogenic landscapes populated by glowing geometric shapes.

With *Against the Grain*, Corrigan's been a generous curator, stacking stories inside one another like Russian dolls, but also leaving room for more tales from the collection. More stories are certainly forthcoming. ▽

## Art From the Heart



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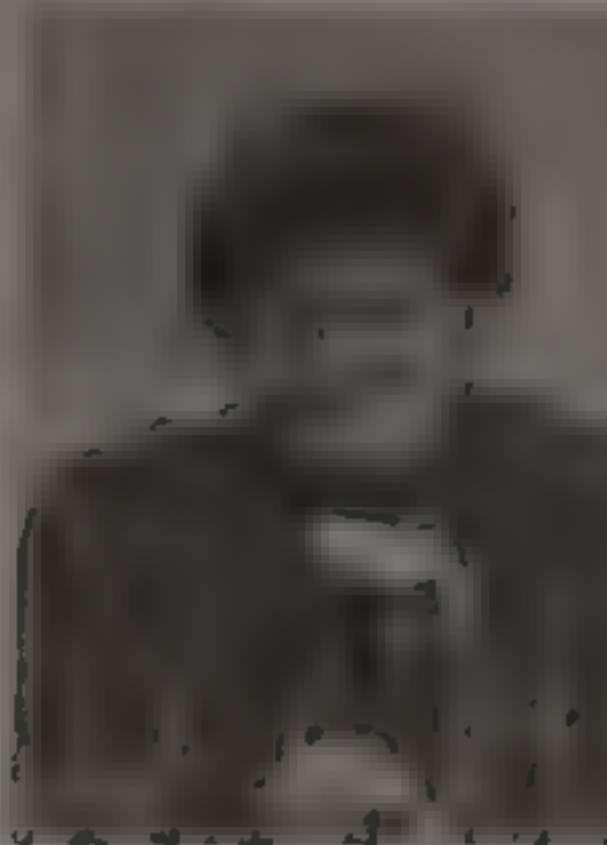
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# Return of the nerd: Belke brings back his awkward odd couple

MATTHEW HALLIDAY / matthew@vancouverweekly.com

Steven Tudor isn't James Bond, or Batman, or even that guy from *Bewitched*, but he might be the closest thing Edmonton's got. Like those roles, the nebbishy Steven and his best pal Amy have become a rite of passage for some Edmonton actors, from 1996's *The Red King's Dream*, to 2001's *Between Yourself and Me*, to the most recent, 2006's *The Raven and The Writing Desk*. The actors who've taken a crack at both roles over the years comprise a pretty good roundup of local talent.

"Chris Craddock was a very soft Steven, very rabbit," says playwright David Belke of the first actor to take on the role. "Chris Fassbender was anxious and nervous, but energetic, and Matt Baram was neurotic."

The most recent Steven is Garrett Ross, appearing in Shadow Theatre's current and slightly re-worked production of *Between Yourself and Me* (though he's played the role before, in the 2006 Fringe production of *The Raven and the Writing Desk*).

"Garret brings a nice warmth to him," says Belke, "and you can see why Amy likes this guy so much."

Those who've seen any of the plays know that Steven is the definitive nerd: asocial, studious to a fault, and unable to comprehend the simplest social clues (when he develops an infatuation in *The Red King's Dream*, he has to look up his "symptoms" in a book). And of course he has a suitably nerdy profession, appropriate for a borderline agoraphobic more comfortable with books than with people: he's an index writer.

But unlike *Red King's Dream*, *Between Yourself...* features Steven playing second fiddle to Amy, portrayed this time by Natascha Girgis (previous actors in the role include



PREVIEW

THU. MAY 29 - SUN. JUN 15 (8 PM)

## BETWEEN YOURSELF AND ME

DIRECTED BY JOHN HODGSON

WRITTEN BY DAVID BELKE

STARRING NATASCHA GIRGIS, GARRETT ROSS, VANESSA SABOURIN, GEORGE SZILAGYI  
VARSCONA THEATRE (10329 - 83 AVE), \$19 - \$22

Andrea House, Rhonda Nugent and Christine Baker.)

"She's completely different," says Belke. "Energetic, impulsive. Amy's always looking for the right man, has a very checkered romantic past, but they balance one another and fill each other's empty spaces. Amy gets the idea she can help Steven find a girl, what with all her romantic experience. You know, she's just the right person to help him—despite how disastrous her own love life is."

**AS AMY TIMES** As a woman who's lived the perils of love, she falls victim to said perils herself. Hence the play's title, taken from the verses of the white rabbit in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* ("Don't let him know she liked them best / for this must ever be / A secret, kept from all the rest / between yourself and me").

"With this one, says Belke, "Amy compares herself to the white rabbit, leading Steven into this bizarre world of strange circumstance where nothing makes sense. And as the rabbit admits, she herself gets lost in wonderland."

The sly references to Carroll's work form the foundation of the Steven/Amy trilogy (the "White Rabbit" trilogy, maybe?) and indeed, Belke has more than a passing fascination with the story of Alice. Not that he's ever been shy about loading up his work with references to his own personal favourites. (In fact, all that allusive winking and nodding Belke indulges in could be fodder for a great drinking game).

"[Carroll's work] is just such great stuff," he says. "There's a fair amount of satire in those books as well, in addition to the nonsense. You know, not all the nonsense is nonsense. That little girl runs through our collective imagination, she's part of our culture. She stands for a lot of things—innocence but also exploration, and finding your way home. Finding your way to a safe place. Which is really what all these plays are about, in their way. It's Steven and Amy's journey." ▼

# Rolling into the Prairies

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vancouverweekly.com

We have it pretty fine for theatre here in Edmonton: there's plenty of established acts who own or share spaces, a well-respected, well-attended fringe (smoke some of that, Calgary) and a bubbling indie scene that bands together to create seasons of its own. But most importantly, from the Citadel to the arts barns, there's enough theatre space to hold them all, and it's easy to forget that this isn't the case everywhere else.

As Theatre in the Raw's Artistic Director Jay Hamburger is quick to point out, his own home turf of Vancouver is a constant struggle to find performance space.

"I don't know why it's happened. Everyone's fighting over so little space here ... it's been a big battle, I can tell you," he explains. "We've performed over 14 years now, [but] we don't have a permanent space by any means. We've been literally gypsy-like on the road."

Vancouver's venue plight is in part the cause for Hamburger temporarily uprooting himself from the coast and heading east of the Rockies on the **Rolling Stock Prairie Theatre Tour**. He's touring three comedic Canadian one-acts across three provinces for as-of-yet untapped audiences for his long-standing BC theatre company. It's a risky, unprecedented move for Hamburger, but according to him it's the best way to get a finger on the theatrical beat pulsing elsewhere in the country.

"We don't know what's going to happen," he admits. "We're hoping people will come and show up and enjoy themselves. In 14 years, we've done the lower mainland, but we've never stepped outside the borders of the province to other areas in Canada, and I just think that's not the right move to make for a theatre of what we can do. It's important that we engage, and exchange and find out what's

PREVIEW

WED. JUN 4 - FRI. JUN 6

## THE ROLLING STOCK PRAIRIE THEATRE TOUR

WRITTEN BY PATRICK FOLEY, LARRY TRASK, JAY HAMBURGER  
THE THIRD SPACE (11516 - 103 ST), \$14 - \$17

going on elsewhere in the country, or what other writers are writing."

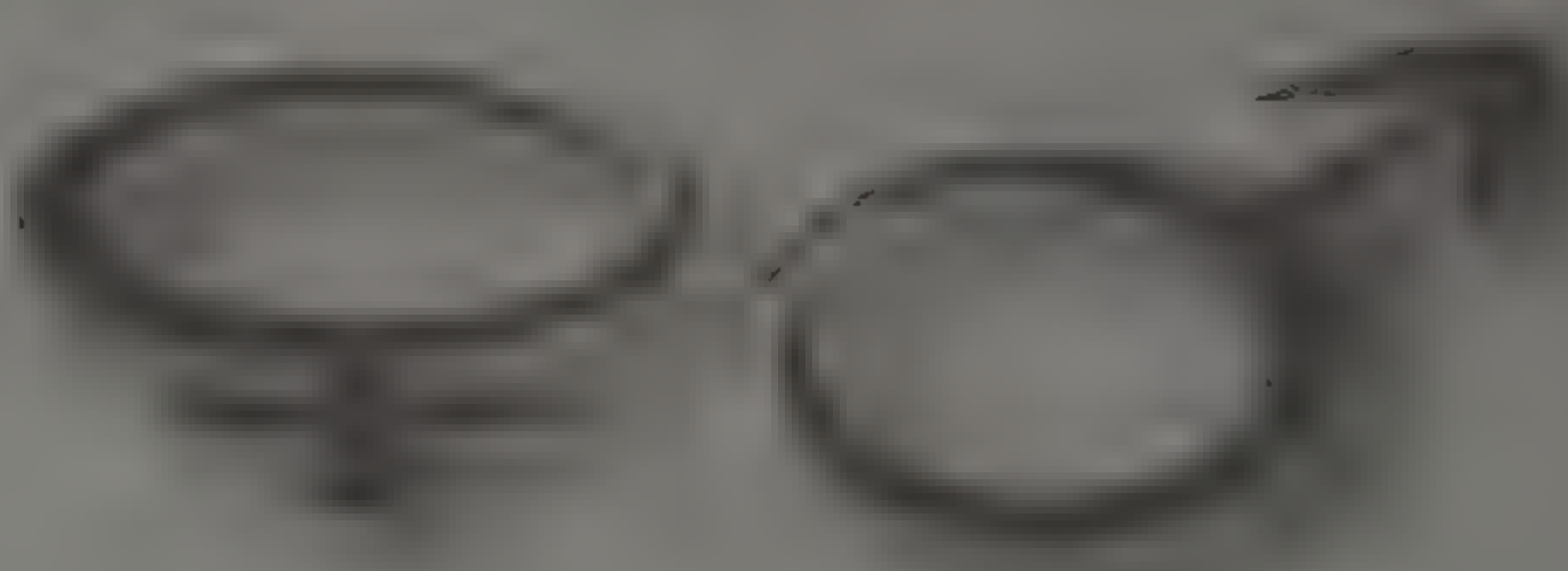
**HAMBURGER WILL ALSO** get to show the Prairies what he's been cooking up on the coast: one of the plays he's bringing on the road is his own. Entitled *A Hot Box*, it follows an arrested tree-hugger awaiting trial, whose attempts to prepare for an art show are repeatedly thwarted by interruptions who keep knocking on her door.

The other two plays are *You What You Eat* (a Theatre in the Raw favourite that first debuted six years ago), a battle between two backsliders, one young, one old, for a favourite restaurant seat (and a waitress), and *To The Queen*, which finds a pair of old men's regular chess game threatened by an impending rum, hockey rink.

Hamburger, a seasoned instructor, is also teaching playwriting workshops in Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg and vocalist Michelle A Richard will also performing "Blues Dans La Nuit," a selection of songs in both of Canada's official languages, making this Rolling Stock Prairie Theatre tour quite the venture for a theatre company without a venue to call its own back home.

"It's the most ambitious tour we've ever taken on, in sense of travel," he says. "But it's really time for us to branch out of BC and explore this wonderful country and the amazing theatres outside [our province]. It's quite expensive here, and that's not a good thing, because we're almost all non-profit, and if the bottom line really was money, none of us would be around. We're doing this for the love and the art of it." ▼

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# It's not Us vs Them

## ART PRAIRIE ARTSTERS

by Amy Fung

is deeply rooted and seemingly arbitrary. Between Edmonton and Calgary, there are various levels—from provincial government attention to

but it's questionable to engage in a battle of Alberta in terms of contemporary visual arts. Extending from their respective former reputations as sculpture and painting centres, Edmonton and Calgary have sustained and developed in very different directions—and the urge to compare and contrast has outgrown itself (with a few minor relapses).

Putting this urge to the test, a friend in the field of art conservation joined me recently for a 24-hour Calgary art trip. Stopping first at the grad show at the Alberta College of Art and Design, the gamut of works surveyed struck us both with the sentiment that we had each seen this show before. Many of the ACAD pieces eerily echoed recent works seen on the other side of the border (and vice versa), and already I couldn't resist the futile activity of comparing.

ACAD BFA Penny Chase's carefully stringed frame within frame was the rainbow doppelganger to U of A MFA Maria Madack's past exhibited work and Ingjerd Jentoft Karlsen's sound and video installation of active water perched within a wooden box was the higher-end déjà vu of Agnieszka Matejko's installation from *The Apartment Show*. Room after room of this sprawling and massive student exhibition curated by Wayne Baerwaldt and Alexandra Keim, constant comparisons were made to recent grad shows visited at the U of A, Grant MacEwan and even Victoria Composite's Grade 12 IB. One is more original, the other more polished, daring, skilled, etc. The compulsive reaction to identify and compare, it regularly occurs with a frequency that is, to the frustration of the viewer, not always due to the quality of the work but rather to the sheer volume of influences and references that surround it. It's an unfortunate side effect of the border's proximity.

Beginning with Lethbridge-based artist Annie Martin's *(im)permeable* at The New Gallery, the informal artist talk was both engaging and thought-provoking, a quality discussion of the work that transcended the world of esoteric academia jargon and the simple praise of personal connections and memories. Stopping next at

Truck for Berlin-Montréal's Bettina Hoffmann's *Parallax*, the lingering sense that Calgary had a deeper pool of emerging and active artists, writers, curators and administrators was reaffirmed when the gallery was suddenly flooded with the likes of Anthea Black and Nicole Burisch. Eventually with over half a dozen in tow, we collectively headed to Stride for Victoria-based Lyndal Gammon's *Interval* to find visiting artists from Banff as well as Stride's executive board members such as Chris Cran still chatting into the night. Walking past Epcor-donated spaces of plus-15s filled with curated exhibitions and performances, and stopping in at a handful of worthwhile com-

mercials such as Paul Kuhn, Newzones and Trepanier Baer, I left the next day feeling recharged. I had a fleeting thought of a life in Calgary, but it was far more exciting to think about the inter-provincial collaborations and discoveries awaiting. Momentarily satiated, my thirst for inspiration continues to explore an unending curiosity into the ambivalent idea of here. ▽

Amy Fung is the author of [prairieartsters.com](http://prairieartsters.com).



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# Rechner's gonna burn this city down

It's simultaneously easy and difficult to describe Tim Rechner's work. The Edmonton-based artist is known for his adventures in abstract expressionism as much as he is for his relentless productivity and omni-presence in the local scene, not only as an artist but an activist/organizer/participant in art-related activities. Rechner is a true believer: creation to him is both sacred and everywhere; a force that rolls through him and the world with the kind of powerful suffusion those inclined to spirituality ascribe to reality.

His canvases and paperworks are explosions of jagged scrawls and undulating whorls, fluid lines and twisting loops. In paintings, they also take on a textural dimension, icy smooth patches of opaque flat colour alternating with slathered peaks and gouged and carved troughs of paint in dizzying combinations of shades, enough so that rainbows seem anemic in comparison.

Perhaps it's fitting that his second show at the Front Gallery is titled *Fire*, when the eddies and crests of his lines echo licking flames and sparks in all their roiling elemental

"There are a lot of paintings, a few drawings in different sizes, some different approaches than you've seen before," he describes. "Some small ones in pencil with no colour; a couple on masonite."

The pieces collected in *Fire* represent (but aren't the totality) of Rechner's creative exertions over the past year, from last summer until recently. His work is driven by his continual practice of stream-of-consciousness sketching and writing (which sometimes becomes text inserted in drawings or titles of paintings), entangled in moment-by-moment engagement with himself and his encounters and influences.

"My work is not concerned with



PREVIEW

SAT, MAY 31 - MON, JUN 14  
OPENING RECEPTION SAT, MAY 31 (2-4 PM)  
**FIRE**  
RECENT PAINTINGS BY TIM RECHNER  
THE FRONT GALLERY (12312 JASPER AVE)

the conceptual," Rechner relates. "I look at my artwork—my drawings and paintings—stylistically as an evolution. I want to keep getting better, as most artists do, so I'm always asking 'is it good? Bad? What do I want to do now?' It's a process of loosening and tightening, and I keep going back and forth."

**BALANCING THOSE IMPULSES**—the private conversation of pure emotional expression and the public one of influences in his environment or intellect—gives his work a tension he constantly works through.

"I feel like my true self as an artist is more about energy, gestural

movements, physicality," Rechner explains. "One of my influences is creating work with children, and that loosens me up, and makes me recognize that the spontaneous approach is something I love—this fearless, pre-conscious thing."

The other side of his work is deeply affected by artists, many of them local (such as sometimes-colaborator Craig Talbot) or formerly local (like Tony Baker), as well as historically important New York expressionists, and graffiti artists.

"I like to learn from other perspectives," he offers. "The 'tightening' aspect is partly from a contemporary graffiti influence: the vivid colour combinations, complexities of compositions. It has aesthetic qualities I admire, but also anonymity that I respect."

And where does that leave Rechner? "At the moment, I'm combining everything the best I can." ▼

# Dance Inner City helps keep the river valley alive

SHERRY DAWN KNETTLE / sherry@vuwweekly.com

The largest expanse of green space in any North American city is Edmonton's river valley, a quiet, natural area with fresh air and a spectacular view where people can escape the noise and concrete of our city. It's an inspiring place, and no one seems to realize that like choreographer Kathy Ochoa. Ochoa recently found a stage down in the valley near the city's core area, and it made her want to celebrate springtime in Edmonton with **Dance Inner City**.

The Shumka Stage in Louise McKinney Riverfront Park, just below the Shaw Conference Centre, was built while Ochoa was in New York for a couple of years. When she first heard about the stage, Ochoa hurried down to take a look, and the whole place reminded her of Stanley Park.

"I just noticed that there's so much down there," says Ochoa. "If New York had a park that big and that beautiful, the place would be packed with musicians and people all the time."

"So I thought, 'Wouldn't it be neat to have a spring festival?'" she continues. "Our summers are full of festivals, but spring? Not so much."

She subsequently planned a festival that will spread its sound throughout the whole park, for everybody to hear. "The acoustics are really good down there," she says. "The music will carry to Riverdale and hopefully across the river, too."

**THE PARK'S PROXIMITY** to the inner city and its multicultural personality inspired Ochoa to track down some of the talent there. Woezo African Dance and Drummers, just back from Nigeria's International Dance Festival, and The Traditional Thundering Spirit Drummers, with their heart-shattering singing, drumming and pow-wow dancing will get the whole audience moving.

PREVIEW

SAT, MAY 31 (2 PM & 7 PM)  
**DANCE INNER CITY**  
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A Cuban dance troupe will perform lively salsa variations, and Ochoa is also choreographing a work for 15 of her own dancers. Her site-specific piece will spread the performers out across the park, moving to the sound of Brett Miles's new avant-garde composition, created for sax, trumpet and trombone. And it's an outdoor event, so the show goes on rain or shine.

"I've done a lot of site-specific stuff, and I always plan for sun, but this time I'm planning for rain, and just hoping there's going to be sun," she laughs. "So there's a shelter for the audience if there's rain."

But there are no seats in the theatre, so Ochoa recommends bringing chairs.

"And since there's a million ways to get inside the area, the concert is free, but we're accepting donations," she adds. "Fifty per cent of that goes to a medical fund for an African child. One of my dancers works for an orphanage in Tanzania and the send children for surgeries that aren't available there."

Marisa Hayden volunteers as project co-ordinator for the Boona Baas Centre for Children's Rights, which houses 11 children, some whose lives have been saved by the surgery.

"We've been sending our kids to India for surgeries," says Hayden. "The little girl we're funding right now is going for ear surgery."

The centre needs to raise \$3800 for the procedure, which will hopefully one day allow the child to hear. Recording of the drumming, horn and salsa music shaking up the silence of our river valley park. ▼

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8. Levon Helm - Dirt Farmer (vangaurd)
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10. The Steeldrivers - S/T (rounder)
11. Justin Townes Earle - The Good Life (bloodshot)
12. John Hiatt - Same Old Man (new west)
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14. KD Lang - Watershed (nonesuch)
15. The Black Angels - Directions To See A Ghost (John In The Attic)
16. T Bone Burnett - Tooth Of Crime (nonesuch)
17. Islands - Arms Way (anti)
18. Firewater - The Golden Hour (bloodshot)
19. She & Him - Volume One (merge)
20. Sonny Landreth - From The Reach (landfall)
21. Duff McKagan - A Simple Plan (stony plain)
22. John Hooley - Mass Of Blood (stony plain)
23. Danny Michel - Feather, Fur & Fin (burnt bun)
24. Ann Vriend - When We Were Spies (fire escape)
25. The Breeders - Mountain Battles (4ad)
26. Samantha Schultz - Both Sides (samantha schultz)
27. Sun Kil Moon - April (caldo verde)
28. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss - Raising Sound (rounder)
29. The Racontours - Consolers Of The Lonely (warner)
30. The DODOS - Visiter (french kiss)

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# FILM

## Springs fever: Dunn's enviro documentary demands to be seen

DAVID BERRY / david@vviewweekly.com

Liberal-enclave university towns lost in the middle of a vast, oil-rich conservative expanse, Austin and Edmonton have always had a lot in common. There is some hope, then, that *The Unforeseen*, Laura Dunn's broad and beautiful documentary about unchecked urban sprawl in—or, more accurately, around—the picturesque Texas town, will resonate particularly strongly in our own city, which continues to stretch its borders almost to the point of lunacy, suburbs popping up like dandelions on the grassy borders.

Dunn uses Barton Springs, an almost literal oasis that bubbles up from a vast underground aquifer in the heart of Austin as her take off point, spending the first part of her film documenting the city's fight against suburban development that would threaten it. Intercutting moments of an epic city council meeting—featuring 400-odd interested speakers and lasting well into the next morning—with talking heads and plenty of shots of poetic clarity, Dunn shows how some prescient concerned citizens managed to halt a 4000-unit development that was perceived to threaten the Springs, a natural swimming pool that connects the people of the community to each other as much as it does to nature.

Their victory would be short-lived, though; thanks to the efforts of some



DOC

FRI, MAY 30 - SUN JUN 1 (7 PM &amp; 9 PM)

TUE, JUN 3 (7 PM &amp; 9 PM)

THE UNFORESEEN

DIRECTED BY LAURA DUNN

SHOWING WITH WARMING

METRO CINEMA, \$10

★★★★

literally environmentally ignorant developers—Gary Bradley, the closest thing the film has to a main character and one of Austin's most notorious land men, actually describes the landscape as blank canvas on which to paint, so focused is he on unit sizes, logistics and profits—and a hippie-lib-

eral-hating lobbyist, a citywide plebiscite was effectively overturned by a state bill that grandfathered development plans to the bylaws of when they were approved. Overnight, land that had sat dormant, approved for building 20 years previous but neglected by cash-strapped developers ever since, was suddenly fair game, and people could hardly pave it fast enough.

**IT'S HERE THAT** Dunn's documentary really comes into its own. Though her biases slowly show themselves—producer Robert Redford is a prominent interview candidate, in case you're wondering which way she leans—

Dunn does a remarkable job of not only keeping her opinion absent in thought and deed, she also manages to get refreshing candour from her subjects, particularly those that sit on the other side of the issue. Often allowing them to do little more than explain their view of life as it relates to development, she shows that this isn't so simple an issue as caring liberals against evil capitalists, but a no man's land where radically different worldviews meet, each as convinced of its moral and practical superiority as the other.

It's that cultural clash that makes up the most poignant thread in *The*

*Unforeseen*. With the original debate largely—and unfairly—turned into an issue of property rights, something near and dear to the good ol' boy Texan heart, Dunn finds a microcosm for much of the debate around environmental issues that persists today (though thankfully seems to be changing, however slowly): lines drawn along the standard liberal-conservative divide, little headway ever made on the heart of the issue saving the springs.

The other ace in Dunn's sleeve is the sheer aesthetic beauty of the film. Dunn and cinematographer Lee Daniel shoot much of *The Unforeseen* like landscape painters, pulling striking, lyrical images out of both the natural world and its manufactured suburban cognate. Of course, the duo is equally skilled with small touches: one of the sharpest visual sequences is an interview with the aforementioned lobbyist, who explains his distaste for Austin liberals while building a replica of a warplane; never moving from his adroit-though-weathered hands, it sums up perfectly the character of a man as proud of his legal craftsmanship as he is dismissive of the other side of America.

The storytelling and image-making combine to form a powerful documentary, one that compels you to cement your views on the issue at stake, while still having plenty to teach either side of the debate. ▽

## Films show the more war changes, the more it stays the same

FLICKS

DVDetective

CRITIC'S CHOICE

dvdetective@vviewweekly.com

It's tough to find a silver lining, let alone laughs, in anything to do with the military these days. That's what makes writer-director Dale Kutzera's *Military Intelligence and You* so refreshing. An obscure little production that came in under the radar, this is no bomb. Instead, the often clever, snappy little comedy fires off some satirical shots with deadly sniping accuracy. And the disc's extra is an actual doc about the First Motion Picture Unit of the US Army, where we see how much money, personnel and equipment the forces put into a propagandistic covering of itself in the '40s.

As its title suggests, this is partly a parody of cheerily instructional film-reels (think of Troy McClure's eager-beaver, teachy-preachy movies screened at Springfield Elementary on *The Simpsons*: "Meat and You: Partners in Freedom," "Firecrackers: The Silent Killers," etc). But its title also smacks of recruitment ad sen-

timent ("Uncle Sam Needs You!") and Kutzera's movie is something of a parody of jingoistic army films, too—as in Carl Reiner's *Dead Men Wear Plaid*, Kutzera and his comrades splice footage from old war movies (featuring Ronald Reagan, Alan Ladd, William Holden, and others) together with his own story.

It's World War II, with the urgently pompous narrator (Clive Van Owen) pronouncing on the importance of information-gathering: "It is intelligence that distinguishes dangerous enemies from merely annoying foreigners." We see Jimmy Ryan, from "Main Street, USA," where all men are created equal, regardless of what Northern European nation they came from, heading off to war, "eager to pay back Tojo for 12/7." That's just one of a number of sharply biting references to the USA's 9/11 world and the Bush administration's unintelligent abuse of intelligence. (There's also a threat level that's upgraded from Orange to "Tangerine" to "Burnt Harvest.")

As enemies try to figure out the others' attack plans and base locations, the bitterness heats up between ex-lovers intelligence officer Major Nick Reed

(Patrick Muldoon) and Lieutenant Monica Tasty (Elizabeth Ann Bennett). Reed offers his soaring, near-breathless, cliché-inflated speeches (always interrupted before he reaches his climax). Tasty, meanwhile, gives anxious looks into the distance.

The film can veer too close to homage, indulging in its own fake story and straying a little from satire, not undercutting a triumphalist narrative quite enough. But then there will be this bit of dialogue: "What we need is proof—rock-solid, tangible evidence"; "I'm sorry I couldn't manufacture any for you." Or the narrator's honest-despite-himself elaborations: "Well, no one said this fight would be easy, except the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of Defence ..."

In this self-castigating satire, American officials are callous, myopic, xenophobic and arrogant, wondering why other countries dislike them, preferring easy, black-and-white oppositions, and "defending the civil rights we've already given up to protect ourselves." Pre-emptive strikes mean "we'll be able to destroy our enemies before they even realize they hate us."

Beneath the '40s veneer, *Military*

*Intelligence and You* not only muses on the importance of restraint and prudence in the (non)use of (non)intelligence, but takes aim at the heart of the militaristic mindset behind the misguided "war on terror"—has all the rah-rah, let's-get-'em-boys attitude really changed that much in the past 60 years?

**THE BRUTAL TRUTH** of war can only be kept out, even through humour, for so long before it comes storming in. An all-too-real moment in World War II, usually referred to in connection with "rape," is the 1937-38 hell brought to the Chinese city by the invading Japanese army and documented in *Nanking*. Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman's somewhat unconventional yet surprisingly powerful documentary. Mariel Hemingway, John Getz and other actors play some of the 23 Westerners who stayed behind in Nanking, echoing them through their letters and diaries. One of the 23 was John Rabe, a German businessman and staunch Nazi who protected many in Nanking only to have his concerns dismissed by Hitler and fall into poverty after the war; Nanking's mayor later collected money from grateful survivors to help Rabe

live more comfortably in his old age.

Rabe, college dean Minnie Vautrin, missionary George Fitch, and the others set up a safety zone that protected and sheltered many, mostly poor, residents of the capital when the Japanese arrived in December 1937. There's archival footage, including clips of some of the maimed or burned survivors of the Japanese attacks. The footage, along with the sober, restrained performances of the actors and contemporary interviews with survivors, make for a steadily chilling cross-section of one of World War II's many civilian massacres. Here was yet another war fought through the vicious violation of women (at least 20,000 in the first month of occupation alone). And in what has to be one of the most horrific stories ever recounted on film, survivor Chang Zhi Qiang, eyes streaming, watches his mother slowly bleeding to death while his wounded brother still tried to breastfeed from her.

From its shocking footage and haunting interviews to its majestic final scene, *Nanking* is a stunning documentary, a must-see-and-bear-it cinematic testimonial to yet another mass war crime, lest we forget. ▽



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ALLIANCE FILMS





# Carrie me home: Sex on the big screen

**JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com**  
**A** substantial amount of recent film has emerged since the trailer for Michael Patrick King's *Sex and the City* hit the web, mostly surrounding the series of telling white dresses that Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah Jessica Parker) twirls it up in. But have no fear, because the wedding element of the film reveals no more than if one was familiar with hobbits before seeing *Lord of the Rings*. The saving grace is that just because we know Carrie and her beau Mr Big (Chris Noth) might tie the knot, it doesn't prevent a walk-in closet full of other shit from going down in the film's two hours and 15 minutes. Trailer or no trailer—once

**DRAMEDY**  
**OPENS FRI, MAY 30**  
**SEX AND THE CITY**  
 WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY MICHAEL PATRICK KING  
 STARRING SARAH JESSICA PARKER, CYNTHIA NIXON, KRISTIN DAVIS, KIM CATTRALL  
 ★★★

Carrie and company hit the screen, fans of the ever-influential HBO series are certain to explode in a burst of masturbatory feathers characteristic of the *Kids in the Hall's* Chicken Lady sketch. And after it opens this weekend, that will leave one hell of a mess for those theatre ushers to clean up. The film kicks off four years after we left the girls, strutting down a Manhattan sidewalk praising the

benefits of fashionable and long-lasting friendships. Carrie, now a best-selling author of a series of books based on her confessional column that ran the entire series, does her best to recap the events that have transpired, suggesting no more than a dull roar of consistent domestic bliss for each of the four characters. Ballbreaker Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) is still raising her red-headed mess of a kid with the awkward (and buffed up) bar owner Steve, while prissy Charlotte (Kristin Davis) is turning her adopted little Chinese girl into a Park Avenue princess with her bald Jewish lawyer husband Harry.

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY 33

# Dreamspeakers' openers need depth

**DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com**  
**I**f the immigrants to North America tried to beat the aboriginal population down, the church was the blunt instrument they used to do it; it isn't terribly surprising, then, that the two films that open the annual **Dreamspeakers Film Festival** not only deal with the church's continuing impact on the lives of aboriginals, but also have little in the way of sympathy for its machinations. What is a bit surprising is that, even in mining a rich vein, neither works particularly well. Gerald Auger's *Honour Thy Father* (★★, 7 pm, Metro Cinema) follows the director's attempts to give his father a proper Cree burial in spite of the fact the Anglican church, of which he was ostensibly a member forbids it. Though this is obviously a profoundly powerful story for Auger, he has trouble broadening it, both in terms of connecting us with his feelings of loss and in terms of contributing to a wider socio-political dialogue. That's likely because the central story in *Father* is more personal than indicative of the current political climate in Canada. Though Auger's

**FEST**  
**WED, JUN 4 - SAT, JUN 7**  
**DREAMSPEAKERS FILM FESTIVAL**  
 FEATURING OLDER THAN AMERICA, HONOUR THY FATHER, SMOKE FROM HIS FIRE, KAMUNDA, OTHERS  
 METRO CINEMA, THEATRE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

local priest denies them the right to perform the ceremony, the Anglican archbishop he talks to is sympathetic—though he does ultimately renege on a promise to speak with the priest personally—and Auger himself points out that the reserve's Catholic Church happily includes Indian traditions in their ceremonies. Ultimately, *Father* comes off as little more than a personal problem put on film, without the benefit of connecting the viewer to the emotions of the story. **STILL, AT LEAST** *Father* is a sober-minded take on the aftermath of the church's doings; it seems a bit strong to call Georgina Lightning's *Older Than America* (★★, 7 pm, Metro Cinema) exploitative, but I can't think of a more accurate description for a film that essentially turns the atrocities

of residential schools into a particularly wooden, rez-centric episode of *CSI*, in both look and feel. Loosely centred around Rain (Lightning herself), a woman who worries her increasingly vivid dreams and occasional visions are pushing her down the same path as her schizophrenic, institutionalized mother, the film slowly reveals two nefarious forces at work, each attempting to keep down the aboriginal population in its own way. The slightly less benign one is the small-town mayor who wants to turn rightful Native land into a money-making resort; the more diabolical one is the church, here represented by a priest who is practically evil incarnate, a mommy-poisoning, amoral bastard who will go to any lengths to keep the church's secrets (literally) buried. There is no doubt rich drama to be found in the story of residential schools, but Lightning's film isn't the one to unearth it; full of easy, broad strokes and tiredly derivative cinematography, it's a film that very nearly does a serious disservice to the issues it's ostensibly trying to illuminate. ▼

# Bike Month's films offer the world on two wheels

**MATTHEW HALLIDAY / matthew@vuwweekly.com**  
**J**une is **Bike Month**, but that doesn't mean you've got to break a sweat. Every Monday this month, Metro Cinema will present a different cycle-themed film for gearheads both active and sedentary. Here are some brief reviews, in ascending order of how much they made me want to turn off the TV, grab my own 18-speed and hit the streets.

**A Sunday In Hell** (★★, Jun 2, 7:30 pm) follows the 1976 Paris-Roubaix road race, a gruelling 160 km French bike race notorious for its last 60 clicks, a hard slog over narrow cobblestone roads and uphill terrain. The film features some of the biggest names in European cycling in the '70s (hmm ... that was supposed to sound more enticing) and is alleged to be one of the



great cycling films, but it'll be hard to tell unless you're a tri-lingual European, since the on-location dialogue is all in Dutch and French, with no subtitles. There is English narration, but still, one wonders why the camera lingers so long with people who can't possibly be understood by the film's English target audience. The film redeems itself in the last half hour though, when the race enters its final phase and the remarkable athleticism and endurance of the riders comes to the fore. Pure sport, this last bit is, and the overhead helicopter shots of hundreds of cyclists jockeying for the lead as they wind through the constricted streets of rural France are breathtaking. Critical mass indeed.

The films that comprise **Portland's Filmed By Bike Festival** (★★★, Jun 9, 7:30 pm) are a mixed bag, but it's a fun and quirky look into the cycling subculture. The films come from some pretty predictable cycling cities—Portland, New York and Toronto being heavily represented—but they reflect some remarkably differing aesthetics. "Bike Lane Liberation" follows a group of NYC bike activists as they stage some theatrical activism to "ticket" cabs, double-parked cars and others who take up the city's bike lanes. "Unicycle Bastards Invade Portland" documents a group of middle-aged guys who take up unicycling (and spend a good part of their screen time discussing how bad the unicycle is for their junk). "Time Bike" is a low, low, low-budget little fantasy about a man who finds a bike that allows him to travel through time. My own favourite may have been the impressionistic, dream-like "Ski Boys," which doesn't have much to do with bikes at all, besides featuring a few nameless young people on what looks like grainy super-8 footage, biking through sunny fields and into lakes set to a soundtrack of dreamy indie-rock.

**BIKES**  
 EVERY MON IN JUNE (7:30 PM)  
**BIKE MONTH**  
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Doesn't sound like much, but it's an artfully constructed little reverie.

**Bikecar** (★★★★, Jun 16, 7:30 pm) follows three snowboarders as they trek across the Pacific Northwest in a three-seater bike car, looking for places to board. The movie follows the genial three some as they bike through towns big and small, meet the locals, get pulled over by cops, get stuck in a mountain pass and get dangerously close to some big fat 18 wheelers on a

too-narrow highway. There's not a lot of "there" there—we're pretty much just hanging out with these guys as they complete their 850 mile pedal-powered journey. But they're just so damn likable, and the film is so well put-together, and of course the bikecar is so damn cool, that it gets a thumbs-up.

**Pedal** (★★★★★, Jun 30, 7:30 pm) is a powerful hour-long doc about New York's bike messengers. Now this is a terrifying occupation, especially in a traffic-choked place like Manhattan. No wonder that it seems to attract a motley crew of the down-and-out, immigrants and the mentally unsound. "I've been rehab, mental institutions, and even there dreamed of riding," says one man. "There are guys who at first sight you'd think were complete fucking losers, but they're masters on these streets."

They know it, too. They careen through red lights, tear the wrong way through one-ways, and slice through intersections, slipping in and out of the flow of pedestrian traffic (not always successfully). There's sure no love between the couriers and the city cabbies, who see them, with justification, as a menace. But their vilification by politicians, drivers and pedestrians doesn't stop the streams of Moham-mad Ali-like braggadocio issuing from their mouths, and it doesn't slow them down (maybe it encourages it). For all the stupidity and un-earned arrogance the couriers display in their work, many of them are very clear-headed about the dangers and realities of the streets, and the film captures this, and the rush of urban cycling perfectly (with the help of a handlebar-mounted camera). Urban cyclists of all kinds are used to the weird nether-zone they occupy in the flow of city traffic, not quite vehicles, not quite pedestrians, sharing an uneasy truce with both, but these guys are fascinating because they're so much more than just a part of society. The best of the bunch. ▼



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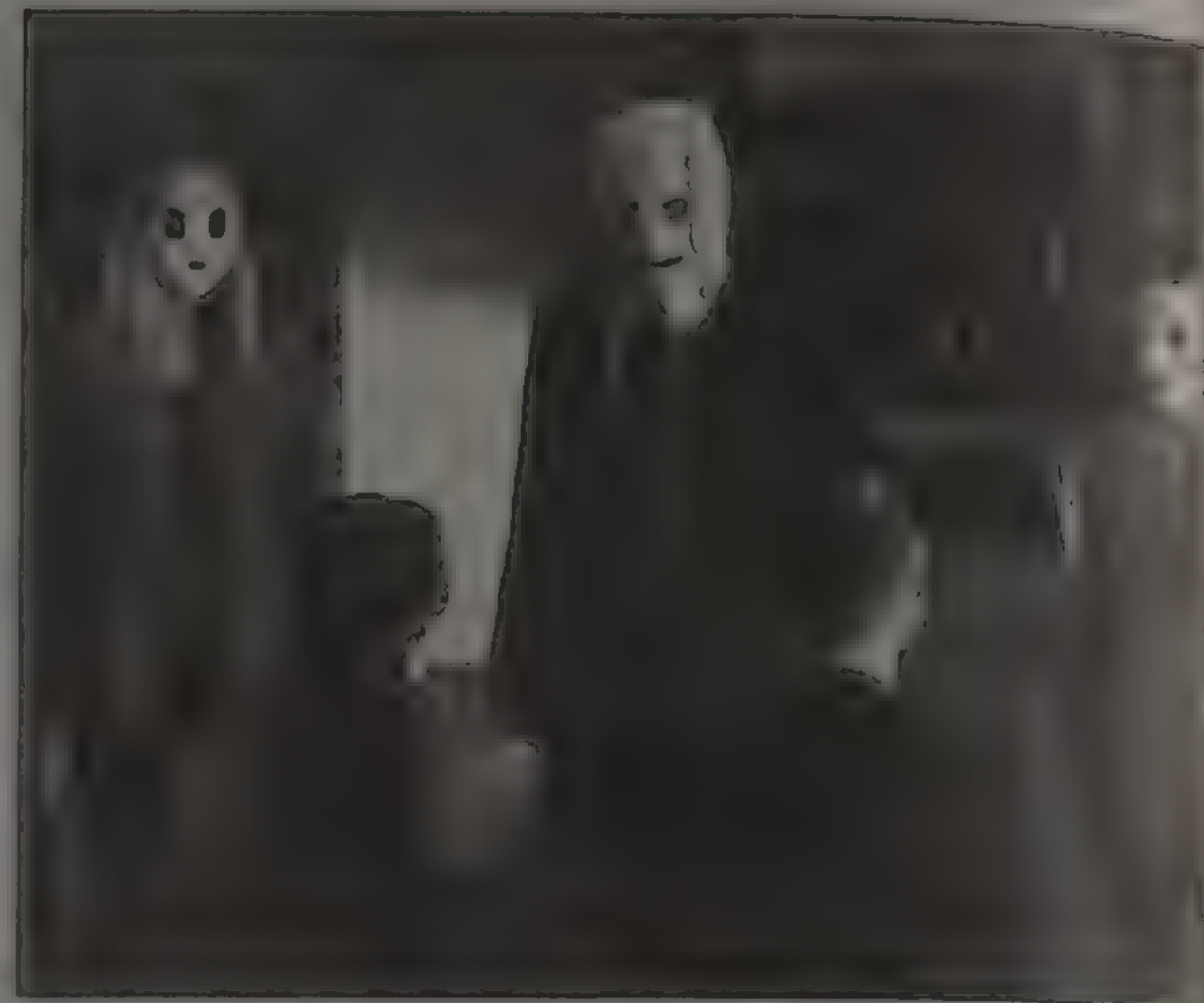
# Character and assassination: *Strangers* has smart chills, but lacks panache

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com

Two effective sub-genres of horror stand in the foreground of Bryan Bertino's first feature *The Strangers*: both an ambiguously character-driven European thriller and a gritty, early-Wes Craven domestic massacre. In a sense, it also bears a striking originality that surpasses the most recent weak-willed popular American scary movies that aim to fool audiences into attending for a couple weekends until everybody realizes how shitty they are. Though at times predictable and overcalculated, *The Strangers* takes some sincere risks in fucking around with our expectations. And that makes me feel, well, appreciated.

After a less-than-successful marriage proposal during a wedding reception, James (Scott Speedman) takes his girlfriend Kristen (Liv Tyler) to his family's summer home in the country. Having prepared a romantic dinner and a rose-petal strewn bed, they instead settle into a bucket of ice cream and a quiet bath upon arriving. For a moment, they forget the awkwardness of the evening and rekindle their intimacy, until a late-night knock at the door. After answering, a shadowed woman's face mistakenly asks for a name that isn't familiar, and something feels like it just ain't right.

James offers to step out to buy Kris-



HORROR

OPENS FRI, MAY 30  
**THE STRANGERS**  
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY BRYAN BERTINO  
STARRING LIV TYLER, SCOTT SPEEDMAN  
★★★

ten a new pack of cigarettes, leaving her to wander through the house alone with her thoughts. But the stranger calls at the door again, confirming Kristen's suspicion that there is good reason to be scared. James returns, though it makes her feel only so much safer as lipstick-penned messages appear on the windows, commencing the wrath of a gang of masked stalkers on the house that are after more than just a cup of sugar.

**THE THOUGHTFUL CHARACTER** of *The Strangers*, that which sees James and Kristen alienated from their relationship at the beginning, builds a romantic tension like horror-thrillers made abroad. In Michael Haneke's *Caché*, for instance, Daniel Auteuil and Juliette Binoche discover a frustrating rift in the marriage as stalkers enter their lives, while in Alexandre Aja's *High Tension*, a complicated lesbian lets her secret love for her best friend get the better of her before a rapist truck driver kills almost everyone. Bertino's film escorts the method, otherwise knows as an intriguing subplot, to share the slab with a bloody *Halloween*-style chase through the woods.

*The Strangers* also abandons the

notion that the audience is obligated to sense-making devices that wrap its loosely conceived events in a clarified package. It's precisely the missing pages that turn out the most chilling results, from the slow, creeping methods of the mysterious hoodlums as they surround the house to the incapable, emasculated efforts of James to protect Kristen and himself. At times, its weirdness keeps the film very much in the moment, creating the audience in an immediate tension that parallels the experience of the victims.

Though there are clearly intended and wonderful gaps in the plot, it's a bit of a shame that it doesn't play stylistic chicken with itself. A couple of biting techniques become quickly overused, such as when the murderers frequently creep behind an unsuspecting Kristen, or when the masks, which almost trump the *Ghostface* costumes in *Scream*, pop out of the darkness. The caution that the film takes with the linearity of its presentation are what makes the events a tad predictable. Such a terrifyingly conceived night mare deserves to feel like one—that castrating suspension of reality that occurs in the ceiling shot of Detective Arbogast's murder on the staircase in *Psycho*, or the giant teddy bear ing oral sex to an old man in *The Shining*. Though otherwise successful, Bertino deserves to make like Hitchcock or Kubrick and push the imagination of *The Strangers* toward new traumatic territory. ▽

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Robert Koehler, *Los Angeles Times*

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## The eye of the tiger is in the buzz of the hummingbird CALGARY'S BEIJA FLOR TEARS ALBERTA A NEW ONE, BUT IN A BEAUTIFUL WAY

**A**ll of the kids that we've grown up with have at some point gotten sick of Calgary or gotten sick of Alberta and they moved away to Vancouver, Montréal, Toronto, New York, Chicago—just about anywhere but I've always wanted to try and invest in Calgary and see if it was the action is try to start the action in Calgary and see if it's a struggle trying to be an artist in this province and I think Edmonton is the exact same way."

As for comparisons have mentioned that the economic boom that Alberta has been going through for what seems like forever now—at least to people who pay rent—can be a double edged sword for artists. While all of the money flowing through the province ensures that the national media is somewhat more interested in the cultural happenings of this province, the rising cost of living has meant that artists and musicians have been forced to seek greener pastures in other provinces. Stephen van Kampen, of Calgary's Beija Flor has his own double edged sword to deal with thanks to the Alberta boom; the frustrations of living in Alberta may tempt him to leave it all behind like many of his compatriots have, but they have also provided him with plenty of fodder for interesting songs on his band's newest album, *The American*.

"A lot of people have said that this record is just slashing away at Alberta. Even the title, *The American*, is about Americanisms that go on in Alberta and, yeah, there's definitely some angry songs," he says. "The first track, 'Life of a Salesman,' I actually am a travelling salesman and I live in Edmonton half the time in hotels and it's about that complete loneliness of constantly having to be on the road doing this, and then there's other songs like 'Poor Man Rich City' about how I used to work in a warehouse in Calgary and just the frustration of being a part of the working class in a city that's so rich with oil, and the poor are just completely forgotten about and how it's gotten worse as well. No matter where we go within Alberta that's something that rings true in all of the cities we go to."

While there is some positive stuff on the album—van Kampen points to the song "Sunny Boy," which is about his son, as a good example—the record is rather dark. Ironically, says van Kampen, even though one of his most positive songs may be about his son, the act of having kids has made his wife and himself even more frustrated with the dominant worldview in Alberta that can sometimes seem to



**PREVIEW** **BEIJA FLOR**  
WITH LAM  
VELVET UNDERGROUND, SIO

revolve around money, with little regard for families or quality of life.

"Before we started to have kids we'd be angry or fed up with the status quo but we were kind of like armchair critics—we weren't really living it. Whereas now, my son is five years old and we just registered him for school and his school is a half hour drive away from our house in Calgary. When I was a kid I walked to school every morning no problem," he laments. "It's these types of things, like taking away walkable neighbourhoods, that no one in Alberta seems to want to change. Definitely having kids has increased our wanting to stay here and wanting to affect change because now we have some roots here. Now we have

something to fight for beyond ourselves, which makes it a better fight."

**THAT FIGHT HAS** changed sonically as well for the band. When it first burst upon the Calgary scene in 2003, the band played a mathy brand of post-punk and its angry political songs growled with the fury one would expect from such a group. This sound was reflected on Beija Flor's first album, 2005's *The Quiet Ones and the Lonely Ones*, whereas *The American* reflects a more subdued, singer-songwriter confessional style.

The changes in the sound were necessitated by—surprise, surprise—a member getting fed up with Alberta and heading west for the greener pastures of Vancouver. This led the band to take on a number of new members in an effort to fill the void, and in doing so, the instrumentation changed allowing for the softer sounds *Beija Flor* current-

ly broadcasts. At six members—including the other remaining originals, Matt Bayliff and van Kampen's brother Paul, as well as newcomers Brett Gunther, Henry Hsieh and Hoyee Wong—the music is much more lush and layered, and reflects a variety of influences instead of just punk ones. One of the songs on the album, titled "Dear Jon," even deals directly with the question of the band changing, asking former guitarist player Jon Reddit what was so good about Vancouver.

"[He] had a solo project at the same time called Sea of Is and he moved it west with a couple of other guys out to Vancouver. Because of that we kind of put the band on hold shortly after our album in 2005. In 2006 or 2007 we brought in some new guys," explains van Kampen. "It's kind of turned into a six-piece—it was never really our

intention to do that and people have made all the comparisons, 'Oh, it's like a collective, oh, it's like Broken Social Scene or Arcade Fire,' but whatever, that wasn't our intention. We had a hole and we wanted to fill it and this is just how it happened."

**HOW IT HAPPENED** has led to a reinvigoration of the band, and plenty of success, especially considering the group has done it entirely independently. After getting burned on the last album due to its record label dissolving, van Kampen says the group was determined to do the legwork themselves this time. Every CD available in a store has been consigned in person by the band and they paid for recording and pressing themselves—even going into debt in the process.

"We decided to release this record independently and we did go into debt, but at our CD release party we got out of debt. For whatever reason our CD release party sold out and we sold tons of CDs and it was really great because it created a little money pool for us to tour with and record more with. We were blown away by it," van Kampen enthuses. "The independent life has really served us well—we've been more successful being self-sufficient than we ever were on a label. I think if we don't do the work, then no one else will either."

And they've certainly put in the work. Not satisfied by the band's stage show, and taking inspiration from the lights at a Radiohead concert, van Kampen set out to create a smaller scale version that would work for the band—whose members wired and programmed the light box themselves. In fact, the stage show could just be the most exciting part about the band.

"It's kind of evolved over the years. What basically happened is, y'know, you'd get to an all ages show on a hot sunny Saturday afternoon and basically all you do is turn all the fluorescent lights on and kids stand around and watch you play and I always wished we could make it a more intimate exciting performance rather than just a band playing in a gymnasium," van Kampen says. "I wished that we could have some sort of light show that would work with our music without being some sort of cheeseball pyrotechnics Kiss shit. So I built this light box and we've got it to a point where it's a series of switches that I control with my feet. We've had it ever since and it's kind of become our trademark. We figure if people don't like our music maybe they'll enjoy the flashing lights." ♥





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**MY QUIET EARTH**  
21/7 • PARACHUTE  
PENGUIN

FRIDAY  
JUNE 13

**RAPTORS**  
CD RELEASE  
SALLY'S SLACKERS / MICHAEL RAULT

SATURDAY  
JUNE 14

**PASSIONGIER**  
ACTION  
VINYL RELEASE

THURSDAY  
JUNE 19

NAMLS WLCM PRESENT  
**CHISLAIN**  
POIRIER!!

FRIDAY  
JUNE 20

THE UNION PRESENTS BONY/BMO ARTIST...  
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DEADLINE IS FRIDAY AT 3 PM

## THU LIVE MUSIC

THU MAY 26 LIVE MUSIC

**BACKDRAFT PUB** Open stage, 9pm

**BRUSHMONT PARTY PUB** Open stage hosted by Alberta Crude, 6-10pm

**BRUSHMONT PUB** Open stage

**DUSTER'S PUB** Thursdays open stage hosted by the Mary Thomas Band, 9pm

**FOUR ROOMS** Open stage, 8pm

**HAYEN SOCIAL CLUB** Open stage hosted by MacEwan Jones, Chris Seeger, The Jazz Grind Experiment, Geoff Wyheng, 8pm

**HUBERT'S PUB** Open stage, 8pm, \$3 at 10pm, \$5 at 11pm

**IVORY CLUB** Live Dueling Pianos, no cover, 8pm

**JAMMERS PUB** Thursday open jam, 7-11pm

**JANE & BAR AND GRILL** Open stage with the Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues), 8:30pm-12:30am

**JULIAN'S PIANO BAR** Open stage (jazz piano), 8:30pm

**LEA'S COUNTRY KITCHEN AND PUB** Country Star search preliminary competitions, 8:30pm

**NORTH COLUMBIA HALL** Open stage, Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers

**STANLEY'S PUB** Open stage

**REXALL PLACE** Kanye West Glow in the Dark Tour—Co-starring Rihanna, N.E.R.D., Lupa Fiasco, 6:30pm (door) 7pm (show), Sold out

**ROCK PUB AND GRILL** Open stage hosted by the Jonny Mac Attack, 9pm-1am

**ROSE BARRAGE LOUNGE** Open stage, Fat Dave Sound Wave (blues), 9pm, \$5

**STANLEY'S PUB** Open stage, Justin Rutledge, 8pm (door), 9:15pm (show), \$5

**URBAN LOUNGE** TwentyOneSeven (acoustic), 9pm (door), no cover

**WILD WEST PUB** Open stage

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# MUSIC WEEKLY

Krazy K, hardstyle/techno with DJ Decha, tech trance/electro with DJ Savage Garret, no minors, no cover

**NEW CITY** Love '80s Party, with Blue Jay, Naz Nomad, no minors, 8:30pm-11pm

**NEW CITY** Bingo hosted by Dexter Nebula and Anarchy Adam, no minors, 10pm, no cover

**ON THE ROCKS** Thursdays: Dance lessons at 8pm, Salsa DJ to follow

**EVERETT BOULEVARD AND TAP ROOM** Thursdays: R&B, urban and dance with DJ Mikee, 9pm-2am, no cover

**PLANET UNDERGROUND** Thursdays: breaks, electro house sound with DJ Mikee

**VELVET UNDERGROUND** Degree, DJ Genec, 9pm, no cover

**WILD WEST PUB** Open stage

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## FRI LIVE MUSIC

FRI MAY 27 LIVE MUSIC

**AXIS CAFE** Friday Live Music Nights in the Metro Room, Rik Leaf and Mikee

**BELL AND COURT** Mr. Lucky (blues/roots), 8:30pm-12:30, no cover

**BLUE CHAIR CAFE** Big Hank Lionhart and the Blue Hearts, \$15 (adv with dinner)/\$20 (door, show only)

**CARROT** Live music Fridays, Ted Ani, all ages, 8pm, \$5 (door)

**CASINO EDMONTON** Open stage, Brothers (pop/rock)

**CASINO YELLOWHEAD** Open stage, Brothers (pop/rock)

**EARLY STAGE SALOON** Weekend: Ryley Tubbs, Chance and Matt

**EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE** Hot Latin Groove (Latin): Amencia Rosa and 3 DJs 8pm (door), no minors, \$15 (adv) at TicketMaster, www.edmonton.ca, Paraiso Tropical, Kns King, Spice Productions, \$20 (door) info 780-953-2001

**FOUR ROOMS** Don Berner, 9pm, \$5

**FRESH START** Live music Fridays, Danda Lee and Andrew Glover, 6-8pm

**HAYEN SOCIAL CLUB** Open stage (acoustic/alternative/pop), Dani Jean, 8pm

**HUBERT'S PUB** Open stage, Tino, 8pm, \$10 (door)

**JEFFREYS CAFE** The Tundo Junkies (vegas jazz), \$10

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Musicians' Collective—Explorations Concert Series: Hardcore Mark Hunderd, Glen Halls, and William Jamieson, Braintrust, 7pm, \$15 (adult)/\$10 (student/senior) at TIX on the Square, door

**TAPHOUSE** Texas Blood Money, guests, 9pm

**TEMPLE T.G.I. Psydays** Techno Hippy Crew, 9pm

**URBAN LOUNGE** Third Person View, \$5, 9pm (door)

**VELVET UNDERGROUND** F & B, Beija Flor, \$10 (door)

**WILD WEST** Tera Lee

**X-WRECKS** Slowburn, 8pm-12am

**YARDHOUSE** Open stage, 8pm (door), 9pm (show), \$20 (member)/\$24 (guest) at TicketMaster

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# VERDERY

Here's something I've never heard a classical musician say before: "I just found out that one of my musical heroes, Prince, recently had hip surgery, because of injuries from dancing in high heels."

The above comment comes courtesy of classical guitarist Benjamin Verdery, who's using Prince's women's wear-related injuries to explain the toll that performing takes on a musician's body. Somehow, it doesn't seem like quite the right comparison for a man who spends his concerts sitting on a stool to make, but all I say is, "Well, he's like 50 now."

Verdery ponders, "Prince is 50, but he makes me feel old."

Though Verdery will likely refrain from dancing in high heels at his Friday night performance at Muttart Hall, it's not as if he'll work a little of the "Prince" material into his program. Verdery's repertoire already includes pieces by Bach, two pieces by Beethoven, and a radical interpretation of the *Blue Danube* waltz by Strauss, all of his own making.

delay pedals, loops and a slide guitar played with chopsticks and paper clips.

"Well," begins Verdery, by way of explaining his atypical eclecticism, "I think it's dangerous to play music you don't actually love. As one of my favourite musicians said, 'Pieces pick you, you don't pick them.' What I'm saying to a lot of younger guitarists I teach is that people want to hear you play what you're excited about, not what you think the audience wants you to play."

Verdery first picked up an electric six-string at age nine, playing as a rock guitarist before switching to classical at 18. Since 1985, he's been the chair of Yale University's guitar department, and, at least according to various press outlets, is an "iconoclastic" guitarist of "fiery technique" and "affecting intimacy" (those plaudits courtesy of the *New York Times*, the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *Times* again, respectively).

But, he's not one of those "hip" classical musicians whose knowledge of the rock world ends with the Beatles and the Stones. He name checks current indie-rock faves the Arcade Fire, the National, the Dirty Projectors and rapper Lupe Fiasco with as much passion as he does more "serious" music—in which his tastes have, maybe ironically, become more conservative.

"I always feel at the bottom of the

mountain," he says. "Like, I never had an appreciation for Mozart and the classical period. It sounded really square to me when I was younger. It took a long time to get what they were doing, rebelling against baroque music, which I've always loved, especially Bach. It seems as if most people from a rock background tend to gravitate to composers like Bach rather than classical period music; it's the nature of the rhythm, it's very driving and the phrases are generally smaller. As they are in pop music."

Maybe one clue to Verdery's wide-ranging tastes can be found in his love for his adopted hometown, New York, where he says he finds his best musical education. Verdery does have that long-time New Yorker cadence in his voice—loud and fast, but genial and gregarious, like he's shouting at a buddy from across six lanes of midtown traffic. And the dense urban landscape has a way of forcing miscegenation of all kinds—social, political, artistic—on the people who live there.

"Oh yeah, right on my block I hear so many languages and cultures," he says. "They're just thrown at you like almost no place I've seen. That intensity is impossible to deny. And at your fingertips as well are also great concerts and musicians and are from all over the world. If I didn't live here, I don't know that I'd be the same musician." **V**

## SUN LIVE MUSIC

### SUN LIVE MUSIC

**CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB**  
Sunday jam session

**DUSTER'S PUB** Sunday open stage  
hosted by the Mary Thomas Band

**HUBERT'S PUB** Singers' Stage  
7pm, no cover

**JAMMERS PUB** Sunday jam session  
7pm, 40¢

**NEWCASTLE PUB** Live Sunday jam  
hosted by Andy and Dave, 7:30pm

**NEW CITY** Rockabilly Mead (C.C. in house)  
concert. Let's Dance no more from  
Rockabilly Mead at New City. Musician's  
openhouse. 7pm-11pm. Mary and Veng

**O'BYRNE'S** Sunday night open stage  
8pm, 40¢

**ON THE ROCKS** Soufiah Fryh  
Singing and the company  
Singing and the company

### CLASSICAL

**850 CAS PLS** Open stage Sunday  
hosted by Chris Wynne of Captain  
Tractor, 8-11pm

**OVERDRIVE** Anything, anyone, anywhere  
jam every Sunday afternoon with the  
Shuffleboard, 1:30-5pm

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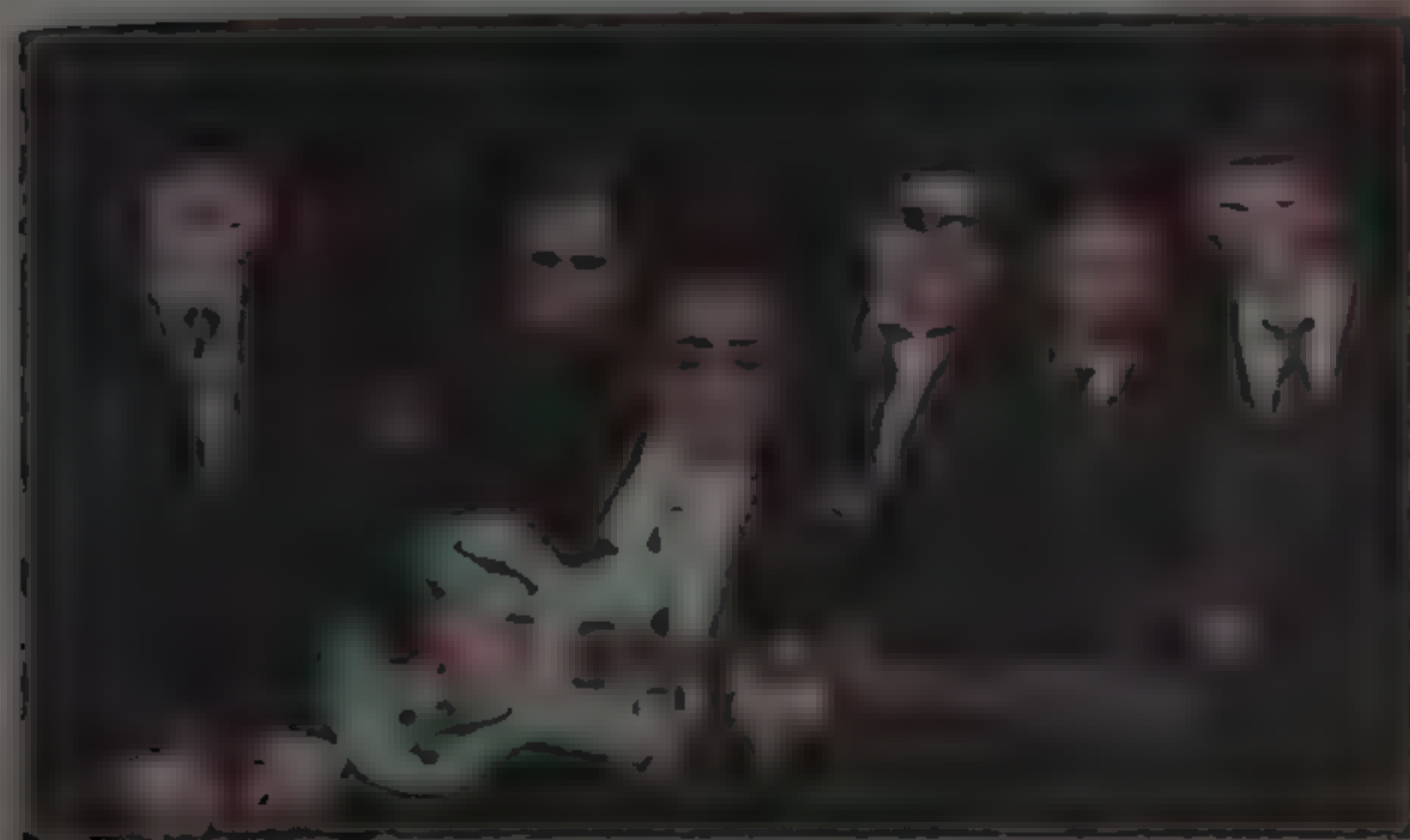
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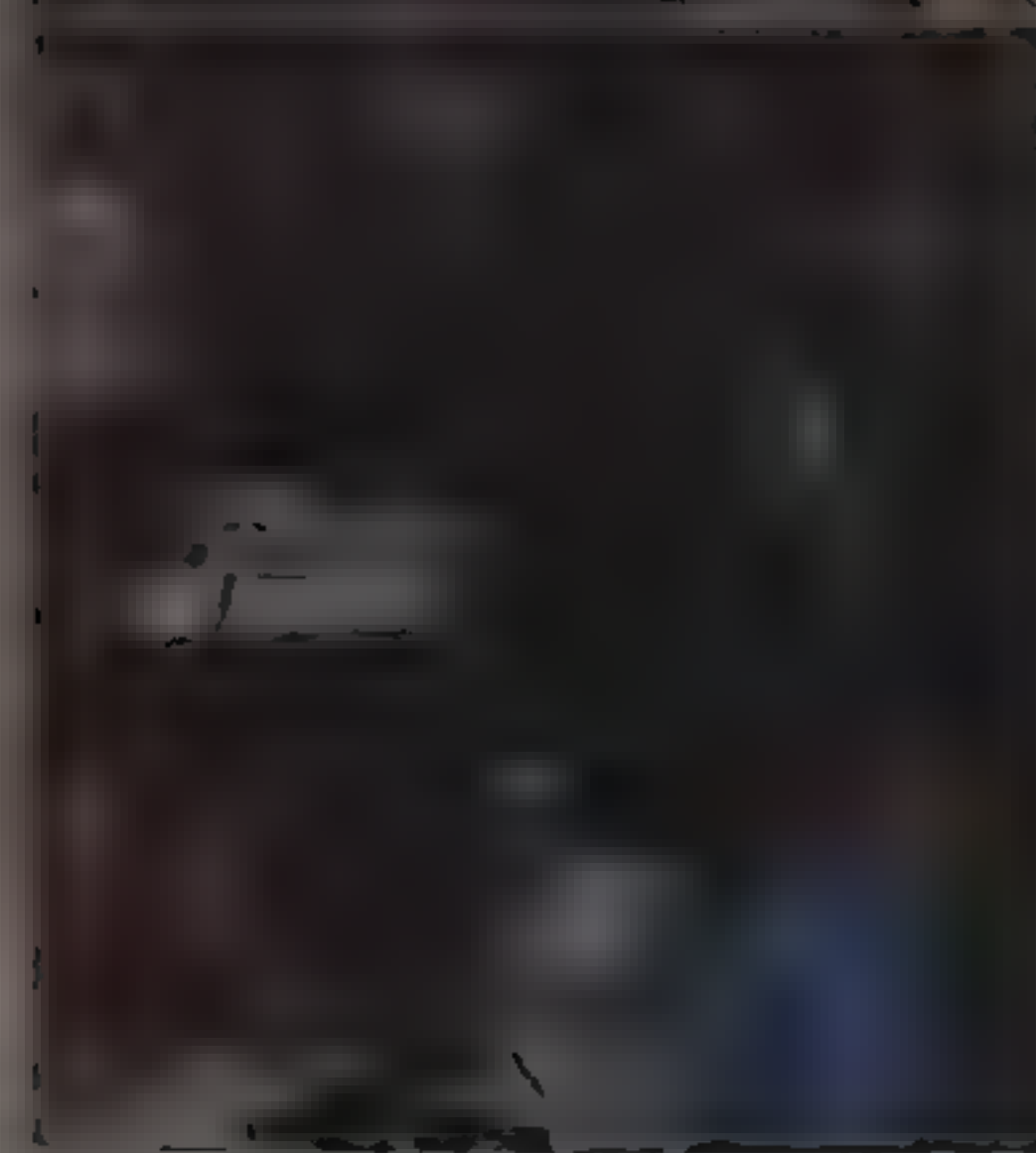
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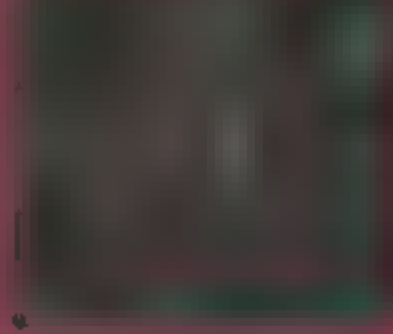
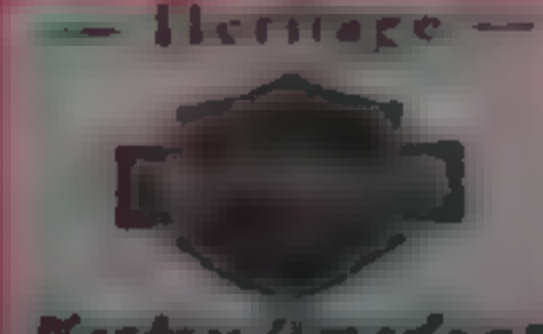
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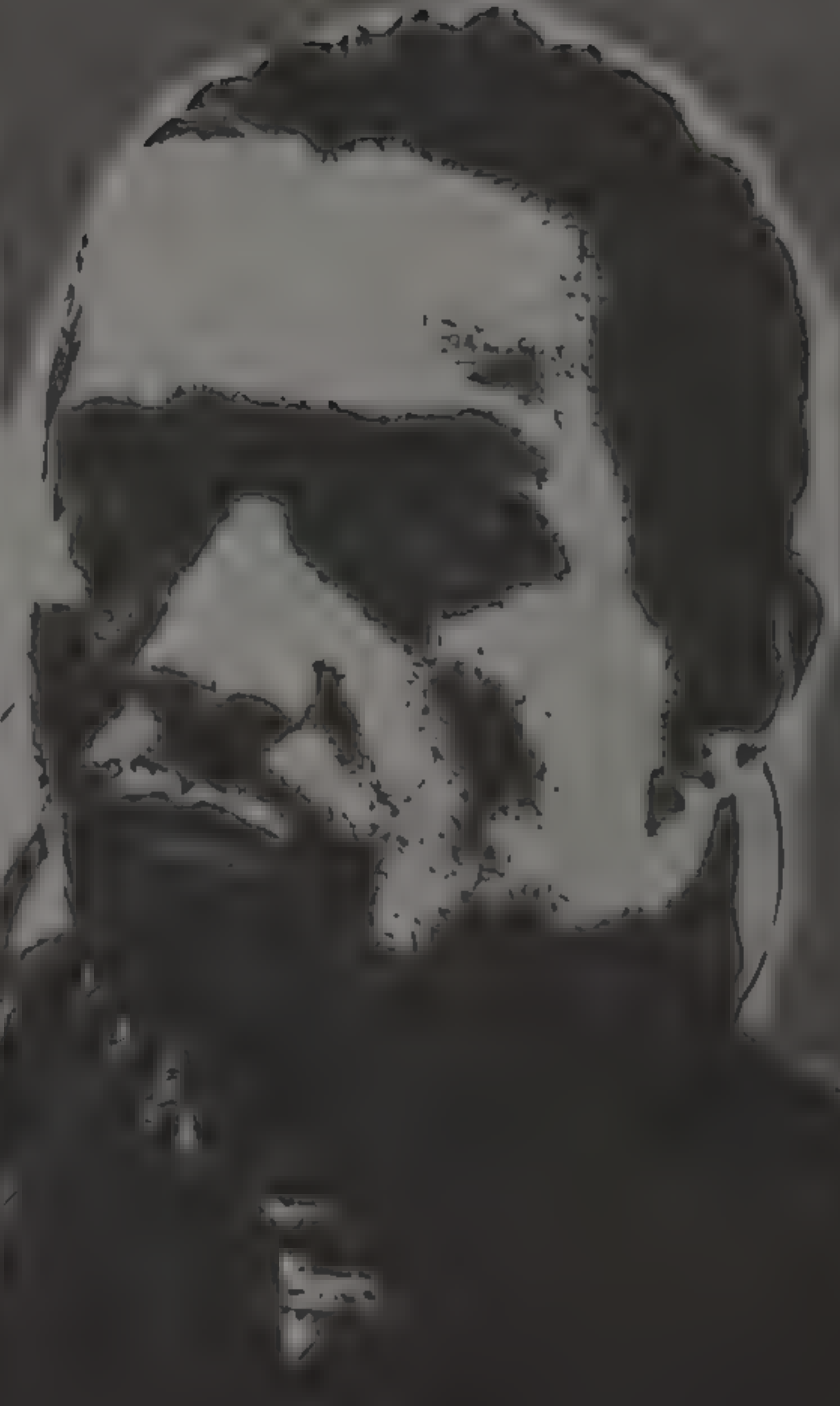
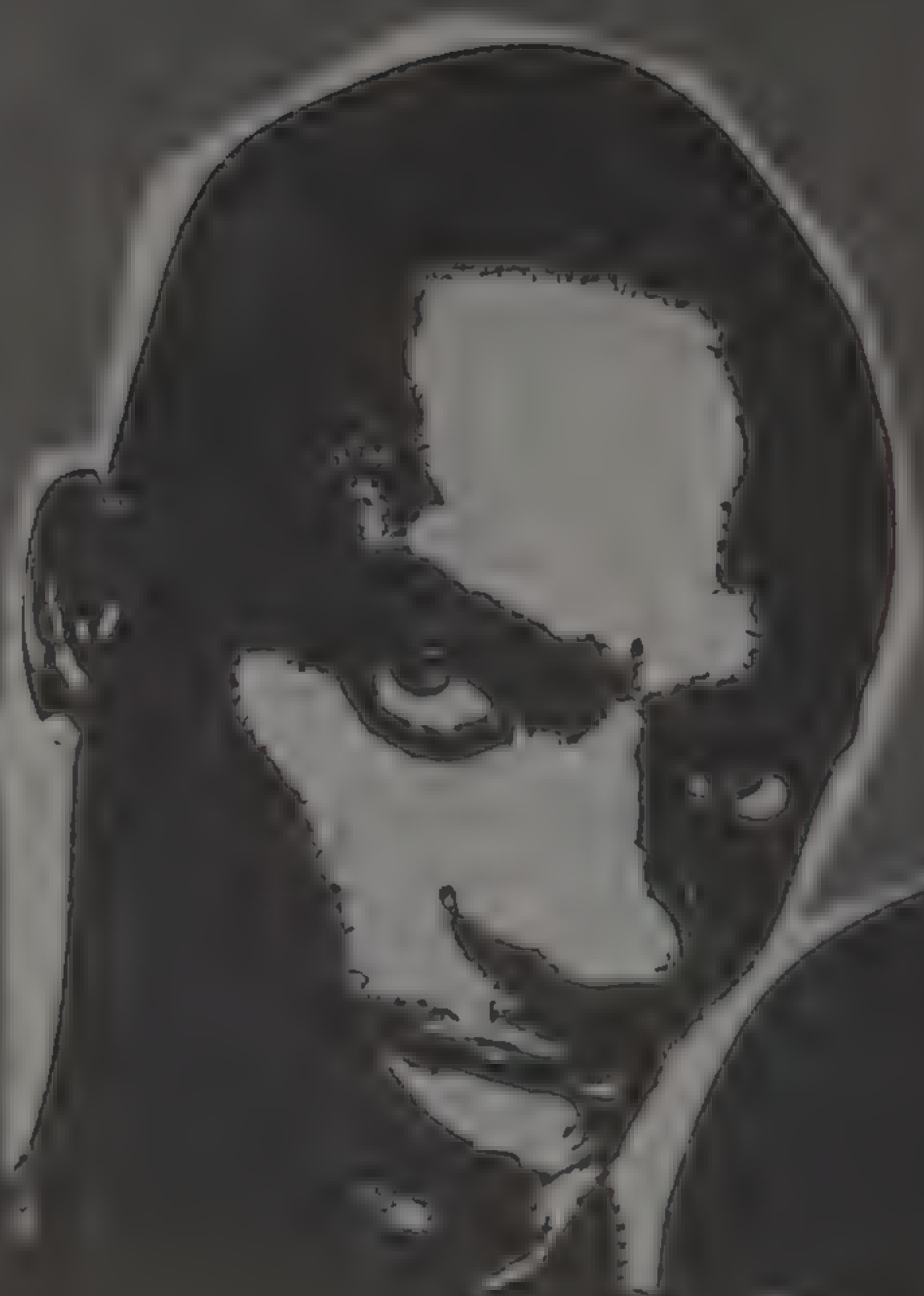


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# Acres of Lions, but no tigers or bears

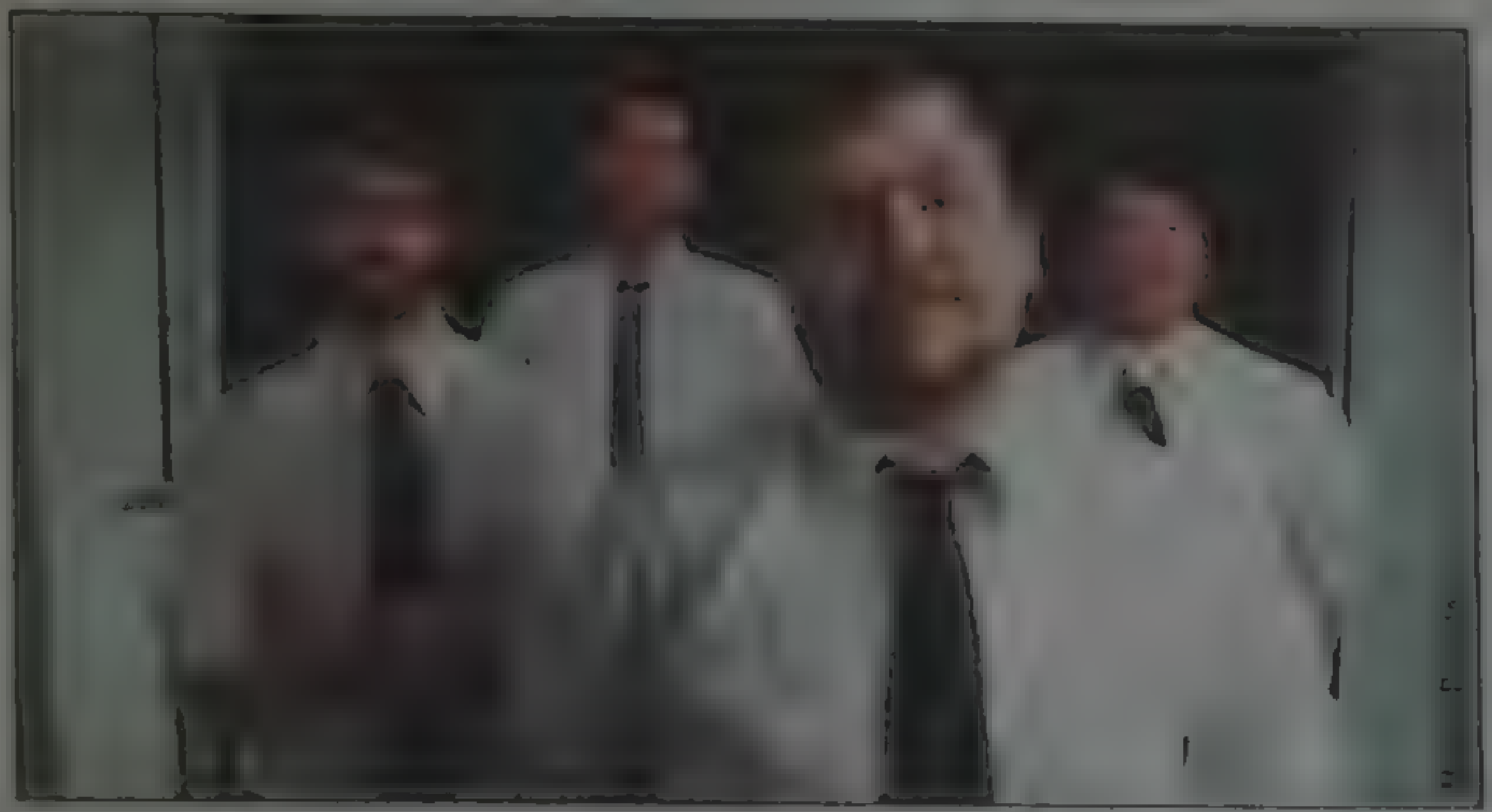
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Come up with a band name and it's a difficult task. There are all sorts of things to consider, and the name has to be something that will be some reference to a long-dead band. Where does it fall in the alphabet? Does it roll easily off the tongue? What if the fans, of course, you can't have friends as they enjoy a few drinks at the bar. Like Victoria's popular band **Acres of Lions**. There is an explanation involved, something about sounding epic and "lions" being the next hip thing, but the intoxicated ramblings of a buddy serves just as well.

"It was kind of a joke for a while," explains lead singer and guitarist Jeffrey K. Anderson. "We were jamming and then we played a show and so we were, like, let's call ourselves Acres of Lions, like Jory [MacKay of tour mates Theset] says, and it kind of just stuck."

But the name even suits the quartet's sound, with its catchy hooks and lyrics that will pull all the willing into the fray. It's music that, according to the band's MySpace page, sounds like "A piñata full of clowns, fun and laughter," and was perfect to land them a Band-of-the-Month spot on Victoria's The Zone last February.

"We're pretty straight up dudes. We work hard at being in the band and writing music and I think [Zone disc jockey Jeremy Baker] saw that and he was just, like, 'Yeah, we'll make you Zone band of the month, and it got a



**PREVIEW** FRI, MAY 30  
**ACRES OF LIONS**  
WITH THE SILENT  
AVENUE, SHAKA POPE

killer response from all of the listeners and they decided to keep it in rotation.

"We were really stoked on it," K adds. "It was a push, to have someone back us to get our name out there kind of thing."

**THE BAND**—rounded out by bassist Dan Ball, guitarist Tyson Yerex and drummer Lewis Carter—has also enjoyed airplay and chart-placing on CJSR. Not bad for four dudes with one EP (an album, *Working*, is awaiting post-production and should be out in the next couple of months) and less

than two years under their belts as a band—and less than a year since the group took on Yerex as a fourth player.

"We were writing simple songs with just, like, chords and not too many complex things, and basically there was just this point where we were jamming that we were thinking, you know, our band could use a lot more things to fill up space," K explains. "You know, if we could do a lot more, why shouldn't we?"

K, Ball and Carter knew Yerex from his previous punk band, Moneyshot. When he asked if they wanted another guitar player, the trio mulled the offer for a while and agreed to have him in the lineup.

"He was stoked on it," K adds, "and he actually helped us out quite a bit and now he's a permanent member." v

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# Calgary's the Summerlad brings its *City of Noise* to ours

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vooweekly.com

It was a substantial affair—15 musicians on stage, but not some big jam or anything like that," Arran Fisher laughs. "People assume that's what *City of Noise* is, so I'm taking care of that now!"

Presumably, the musicians of the Summerlad must bust out jams somewhere in their cycle of creation, but you'd never tell from the results. On stage or over the course of their recording projects, their music is marked by precision and intent, with even pauses underlined by determination.

The veteran art rockers have been mainstays on the Calgary scene for eight years now, one of that city's most stable configurations of music-makers. A recent shakeup—they lost guitarist Sean Grier but gained electric ivory-tinkler Liz Collins last year, with some overlap—shifted the sonic



thumbprint slightly, but the band remains the veteran practitioners of angular and glossy compositions, bal-


ancing intricacy with straightforward guitar riffs and thundering rhythms, moody atmospherics with more rau-

cous aural blasts (emphasis on the latter when playing live). The Summerlad specializes in being cerebral but not

PREVIEW  
THU. JUN 5 (8 PM)  
THE SUMMERLAD  
WITH GUESTS  
NEW CITY

chilly, arty but not stuck-up and rock without sloppiness.

"When we write music, we derive great pleasure from elaborate structures," Fisher shrugs. "It's not at all us trying to be like any more on higher ground than other musicians, it's just what gives us pleasure. We're nothing in terms of complexity compared to classical musicians—we're really meat and potatoes still, just scratching the surface of what can be done with composition. We don't want to have to bow to the whim of the punters, but we're not out to alienate. We generally satisfy that rock music urge, especially at bar shows. In the end, I hope we're pow-



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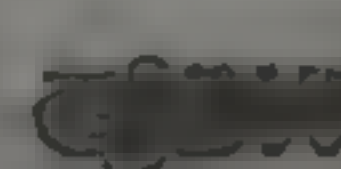
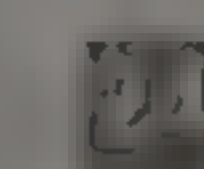


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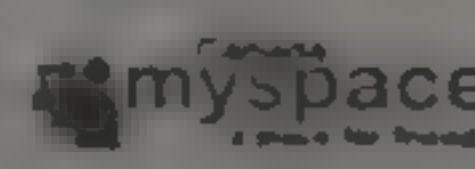
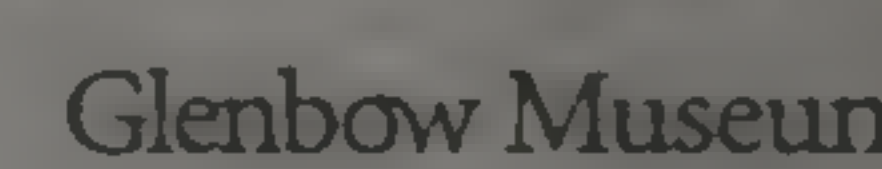
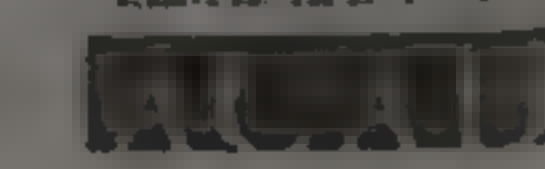
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TOP 2005

"It was 'a day in the life of a city'—we didn't conceptualize much past that," Fisher explains. "We wanted to put it up for the listener to make their own picture of it, draw their own associations. In a way, the theme was something for us to write around, to give us structure for a musical trajectory, so it wasn't endless noodling."

THE FULL-LENGTH PIECE, clicking in

at around 40 minutes, was built from one of the earlier Summerlad-universe pop songs, a taut, anthemic number that verged on apocalyptic funk. The band stroked and sculpted the piece, adding movements and variations that return to themes again and again, convincingly conjuring up a particularly intense Calgary day (probably a Friday—it has the manic trainwreck energy of morning crisis, but also restive moments and periods of elation)

Abridged versions have since been performed, and the Summerlad—notoriously fastidious studio creatures—finally finished committing *City of Noise* to album form (vinyl and CD, with both formats including the original four-minute song and the whole composition) late last year, releasing it late this past winter. The band's attention has turned to touring it over the next few weeks across several provinces, although Fisher confesses that there is another agenda

"We may not play the actual piece in full," he offers. "We've done it twice in Edmonton, once fairly recently. We haven't really decided what to do with the set, but we've started a new record, we're 80 per cent recorded now. We write in the studio, so we kind of have to learn to arrange and play this album live, that's what really this tour's for. So we're going on the road with two sets. *City of Noise* and 'normal' rock songs, our new songs." ▽

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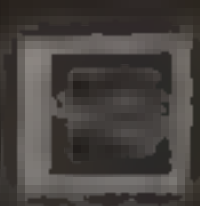
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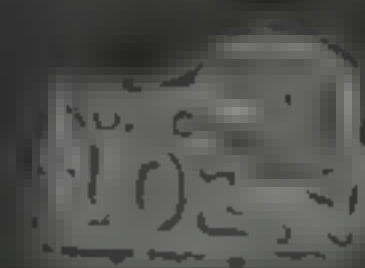
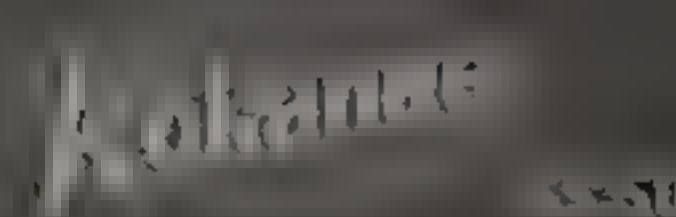
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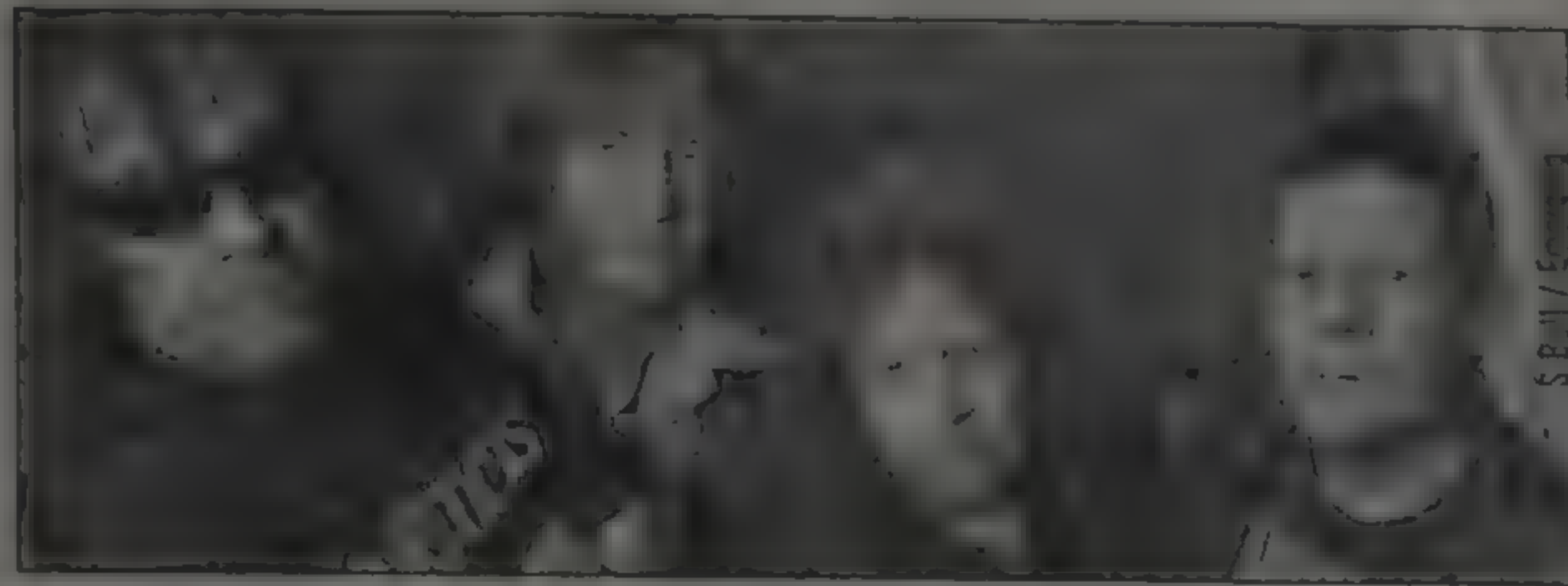
# Teenage Head plays the standards on new album with Marky Ramone

There's a long tradition in jazz music of different players getting together and putting their stamp on some old tunes—the ones that have become standards in the clubs everywhere. And while the collaborations between big names like saxophonists Miles Davis and John Coltrane might be the ones that neo-boogie jazz fans are likely to seek out, eventually, they soon learn that the other players—even ones as underappreciated as the drummer—are just as important to the overall sound of a song.

Those points might not appear to have a whole lot to do with a Canadian punk band, but Gord Lewis, guitarist for Teenage Head since the band's inception in the early '70s, is very much aware of the role that everyone plays in making music, from the drummer over to the producer.

"The drummer is the engine, and the producer is the guy that steers the ship. They're two pretty important guys, but you do take them for granted," Lewis laughs over the phone from his Hamilton home. "Gord Lewis has always been the guy scouring the album art and credits for some glimpse into the magic behind the creation of his favourite albums. 'You can learn a lot from reading the credits. Even as a kid I studied—I wanted to know about the publishing, I wanted to know the writers, I wanted to know who produced, I wanted to know where the recording studio was, I wanted to know the engineer, I wanted to know the executive producer—I wanted to know all of it.'"

A couple of things that Lewis learned from reading the credits while listening to the albums was just what drummer Marky Ramone and producer Daniel Rey brought to the table for one of Lewis's favourite bands, the Ramones. Having followed the group as a fan



**PREVIEW** **SUN, JUN 1 (8 PM)**  
**TEENAGE HEAD**  
WITH LIT'S BANG!  
NEW CITY, \$13

throughout its career, as well as opening up for it with Teenage Head a number of times, Lewis jumped at an opportunity to play with Ramone, turning a couple of gigs into a new Teenage Head album featuring Ramone behind the kit and Rey at the controls for a set of some of the band's very own standards. Ramone only had a few days set aside for recording, so Lewis and the rest of Teenage Head had little time to plan the album.

"It became interpretations of songs we had already done because we had to give it to him really quick," Lewis says about the choice to revisit the older songs rather than writing new ones. "I talked to Steve [Marshall, bassist] and he said let's do our fastest and loudest... It was really quick [picking] the songs that we decided to do. Five, 10 minutes or so, 'OK, let's do this, let's do that,' and that's what we did."

**ONE THING THAT OFTEN** mars many greatest hits records is the fact that songs drawn from several albums have a tendency to fit awkwardly together. Teenage Head was ahead of the curve from the get go, laying down reinter-

pretations of the songs without trying to recreate the original experiences, but Lewis also paid attention to the order of the songs, approaching the project as an entirely new entity rather than a mish mash of older material.

"At first what I thought about doing was a chronological [approach]," he says. "I thought about doing it from the first album right to the very end, and that's the way I was listening to it mostly, but then for some reason I just thought let's use a musical approach to it and I started thinking, 'What key is each song in?' I just started tearing it apart a lot more, and I thought about intros to songs, and I thought, 'Is there a key change?' or 'What chord does this song end on?' and I had fun with it."

"I really did take it in the context of an LP," he continues. "I really feel fortunate coming from that time [when you had to turn an album over] because there was a strategy to song order, so you did have to make an album to have a completion to it. It was like one solid piece of music, and I think that's lacking a bit today, I think that's taken for granted a bit because it's all a bang, bang, bang way of approaching things. I will miss it when the day comes that that's totally abandoned and I get the feeling that we are getting to that time I don't know if we'll be able to go back, but we're definitely in the here-today-gone-tomorrow world, very disposable world, so continuity doesn't mean a whole lot." ▽

## Chloe Albert is in a *Dedicated State*

There's a paradox in reaching a goal that you've strived for, one that filled your time and thoughts. Comes in two words: Now what?

For local singer-songwriter **Chloe Albert**, that little question came when she recently and finally released her debut CD, *Dedicated State*. In between full-time school and then work, Albert spent two years of her spare time taking each step to a shiny plastic disc.

"Since it came out and after this CD release, I've been sort of in panic mode—like, what do I do now? What do I do? I'm not busy anymore," she says. "But I realize you gotta let things have their own legs a little bit and do what you can and just see what happens."

Really, there's always a lot to be done—always writing and all that stuff on the side," she adds. "There's always a ongoing process."

**PREVIEW** **FRI, MAY 30 (7 PM)**  
**CHLOE ALBERT**  
WITH LIT'S BANG! & PETER D'AMICO  
DISRUPT THE BLINDNESS  
ROUGE LOUNGE, \$10

**INDEED, WITH** *Dedicated State* in her hands since last month, Albert can spend her new spare time gigging and getting it out there. So far, people are listening, taking in her velvety vocals and liking what they hear.

Albert attracted the attention of David Ward, host of CKUA's *Afternoon Edition*, while performing at Calgary's JunoFest in April, and the encounter landed her on the independent station's chart—entering in at number three. Not a bad debut.

"That was really awesome and that was a great gig to play right after my CD came out because that's sort of what got me linked up with CKUA

and some really great artists that I admire. The city was buzzing, so it was just an exciting place to be."

"At festivals there's usually all different kinds of music, so people who wouldn't necessarily like what they heard on the radio or they didn't think they'd like it, they'd hear it live there," she adds. "And the live show is always a lot different than what a recording offers. So sometimes you can hear it and think, 'I don't like it,' and then you hear it live and you're like, 'I love it!'"

While Albert's upcoming show (May 30) is a fundraiser for the Abbotsfield Youth Project, it also provides an opportunity to bait and hook more fans. Not that it should be that difficult. Albert is a nice addition to the city's long history of producing talented singer-songwriters, from Terry Morrison to James Murdoch, and it's doubtful that she'll be asking "Now what?" for too long. ▽

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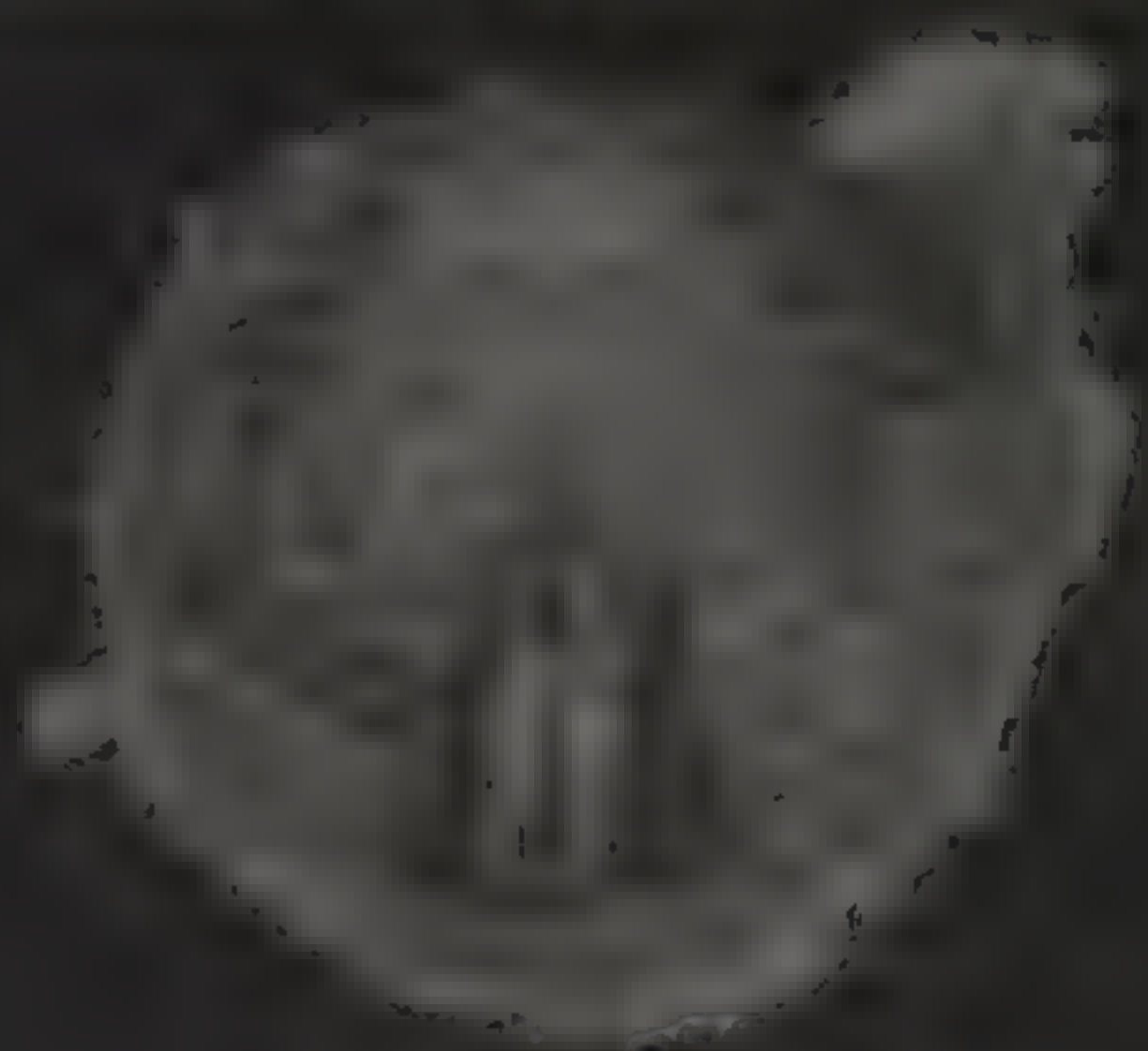
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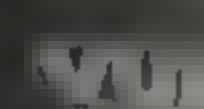
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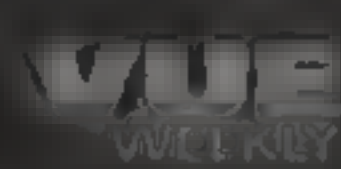
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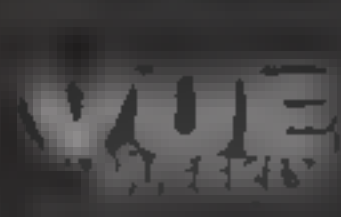
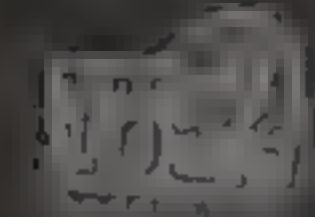
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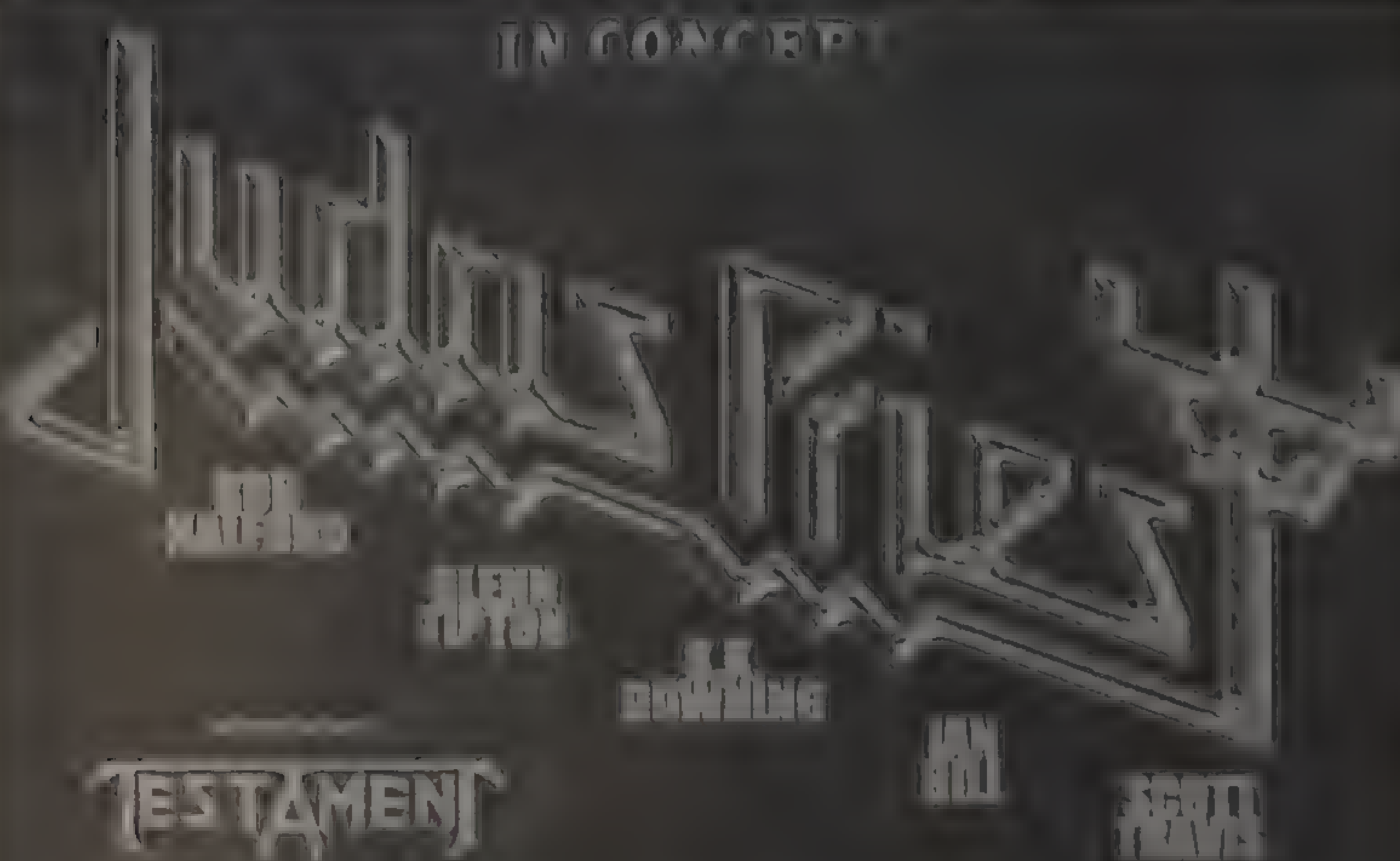
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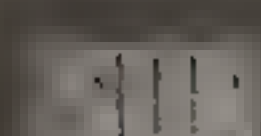
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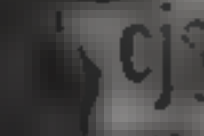
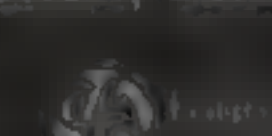
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 ...not a breakup.  
 ...a phase when we  
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 ...a phase when we were playing  
 ...and fighting and I actu-  
 ...the band," explains lead singer  
 ...of the genres of the  
 ...promoters. "I made the conscious  
 ...it first and then I was  
 ...back into it. One we got back into  
 ...even think people had heard  
 ...broken up and we planned a show  
 ...out to be huge and we  
 ...out why it was so huge  
 ...because of ego—I thought it  
 ...to blow.  
 ...the issue at the  
 ...the fighting was business

The band had barely written any new songs, but they were all getting sick of the songs on their last album, 2005's *Brand New War*—a situation they are hoping to remedy in the near future by releasing another full-length.

"It'll be everything the last one was-n't," explains Johns. "I don't think there's anything wrong with [*Brand New War*], I just think we're that much better as a band now—we were just kids screaming uninformed political babble. I don't think my balls had even dropped at that point."

"We're not gonna rush to put out a CD just to put out a CD," adds guitar player Cody Obrigewitch. "We're gonna make it so everybody in the band is happy about every aspect of it."

But what of their destructive reputations? How will this weekend's show at the Back Draught Pub turn out? Well, it depends on the fans really.

"We played the Rendezvous once and Dead Jesus had played the night before, and the owner told us, 'We had 200 metal heads in here going crazy last night, and 50 of you punk rock dirtbags come in here and it'll take us two days to clean it up!'" laughs Obrigewitch. "The toilet was busted, there was shit everywhere, it was just a gong show."

Johns says he won't let it come to that—this time.

"It's my neighbourhood pub, I've been drinking there since I was 16 years old. When they found out, after I turned 18, they were pissed but I had a fake ID, so they were totally covered," he says. "But yeah, it's my neighbourhood pub, so I'm not gonna let it get fucked." ▽

AXIOMATIK  
 PHOTOGRAPH BY [illegible]

GEN HANDLEY / [gen@vuvueweekly.com](mailto:gen@vuvueweekly.com)

When asked what inspired the content on their new CD, *Premeditated Accidents*, the three band members of Axiomatik have no problem answering the question.

"Relationships," says drummer and occasional singer Kris Flajs, who says he's had his fair share of painful breakups. "It's about some broken, bad relationships from the past."

"We're a bitter, bitter bunch of guys," says a grinning Shawn Lamble, who's the lead singer, guitarist and primary writer of the album's lyrics.

"It's a Hank Williams record," Flajs adds with a smile.

Using an arsenal of sounds that include a children's choir, orchestra bells and a pedal steel guitar played by Lamble's father, *Premeditated Accidents* is

over 40 minutes of every rock sound you've heard in the last four decades. While there are moody, angst-riddled songs like "The Alibi" scattered throughout the album, there are also some upbeat tracks like "Rob Me Blind," which still has all of the relationship frustration of the slower ones. But along with the torment, there are songs like "Shadowdream" and the catchier-than-hell tune "One in a Million"—a surprisingly great mix of country and punk sounds.

Lamble doesn't make any apologies about the band's indefinable sound.

"If you can't follow us, then you can't follow us," he says. "But if you can, then hop on board. Our music is what it is. There's no sugar coating or anything."

In a way, Axiomatik's sound is a good metaphor for what the Edmonton music scene is like: it's honest and all over the musical map.

"There's an emotional depth and sincerity in our lyrics, especially on this record," says bass player and band

philosopher Greg Kolodychuk. "With the whole relationship theme, our songs have many undercurrents of an irrefutable truth that our band name suggests."

Even though *Premeditated Accidents* can feel scattered at times, the complexities actually make the CD a more accessible experience by keeping you guessing and wondering what else is around the corner. Lamble's solid, wailing voice is as convincing as the words he sings throughout the album's 11 tracks. On two of the songs, Flajs offers very different, but just-as-persuasive vocals, giving the CD an even more unpredictable feel.


While Kolodychuk joined Lamble and Flajs only a month ago, Axiomatik has been together since 2004. Since that time, Lamble says his definition of success has changed and evolved into one simple philosophy.

"To me, we're successful if we make that next CD," he says. "It's not that complicated." ▽

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# Oh Dan Mangan! Stand on guard for me



CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

Certain career choices elicit skepticism. You can test that theory yourself. Try telling your folks you want to be an artist, a writer or a musician.

Those same types of careers, however, have commonly recognized milestones: showing at a major gallery, seeing your name in print, or getting on the cover of *Rolling Stone*. These milestones provide tangible evidence not only of your talents, but also of your broader acceptance—and bragging rights for those who know you.

Vancouver singer-songwriter Dan Mangan had already released a record and an EP; he had played gigs as far as Australia. It wasn't until he showed up on the rink at GM Place last January, though, to open a Canucks game with the Canadian anthem that aunts and uncles, old high school friends, could take his pursuits seriously. That kind acceptance was only a by-product, however.

"I felt electric after," Mangan says while finding a parking spot in Duncan, BC. "It's one of those things that you don't really expect to do along the way, and then someone calls and says, 'Hey, do you want to do this?' And you say, 'Fuck, yeah!'"

If you're not a hockey fan and missed the performance, you may be happy to know that Mangan represented the country well, not only with voice as rich as maple syrup, but

with his most Canadian thing possible," he says, "which would be flannel, plaid lumberjack shirt that

is so familiar with Mangan, the lumberjack shirt surely won't surprise you. It goes well with the scruff on his face and the gruff in his voice, and his

Even while winning comparisons to Roddy Guthrie and fellow Canuck troubadour Hayden, however, Mangan has found it difficult to register in

the Canadian consciousness. Like other musicians before him, he's found that garnering fans and gigs around the globe has been substantially easier.

"When you're booking a tour somewhere, all you really have to say is that you're from Canada and people open their doors," he admits. "It's amazing. Everywhere you go, there's

PREVIEW SAT, MAY 31 (8 PM)  
**DAN MANGAN**  
WITH THE WHEATPOOL, JON LOVELL  
NEW CITY COMPOUND

this appreciation for Canadian music." Touring Australia and listening to the country's national radio station, Triple J, for instance he'd hear music from Tokyo Police Club, Broken Social Scene and Tegan and Sara, Canadian bands getting the kind of airplay they don't always enjoy at home.

While he wants to make it clear that he's not bashing Canada, he does try to explain why Canadians tend to accept (and reclaim) their artists after they get larger acceptance.

"Vancouver's a very small scene and it's even hard, at times, to get publicity in Vancouver until you've gone to Toronto, say," he says. "And then once you've gotten some great press in Toronto, then you get press in Vancouver. And that happens on a small-scale level, between Vancouver and Montréal or Toronto, and then it also happens on a country scale, so I think it's kind of the Canadian way."

Maybe Canadians are like the skeptical parents of an emerging artist. We might believe that our child is talented, but that belief is mixed with a touch of worry about how that child is going to make it in the world. And when they do, we can let out a sigh of relief and finally tell our friends what our baby has been up to. ▽

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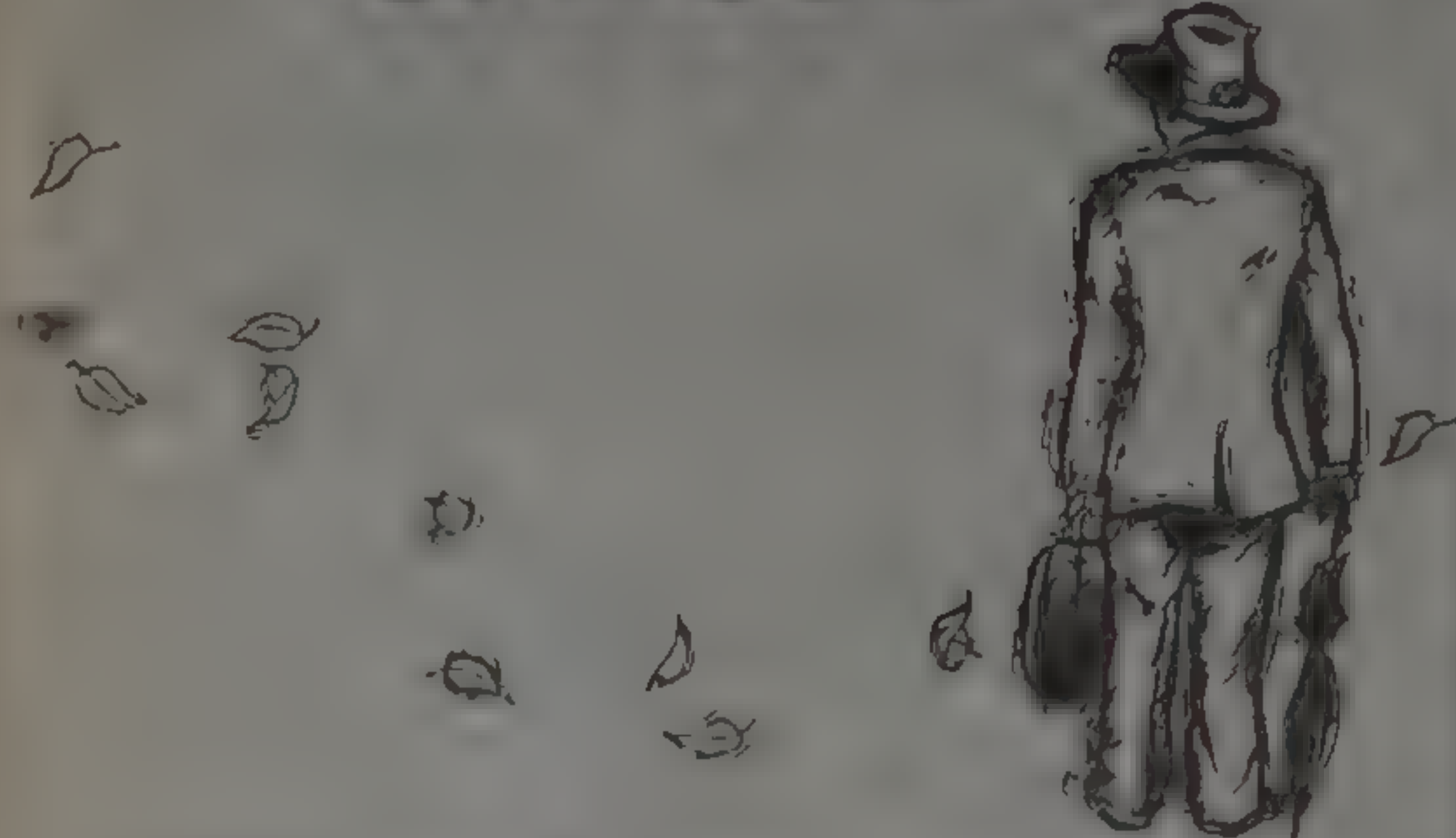
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## ALBUM REVIEWS

# NEW SOUNDS

CHRISTINA MARTIN  
TWO HEARTS  
CAME ON DOWN

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

They always say that you should open up strong and go out stronger—well, somebody probably said that—and that's the approach that Christina Martin takes on *Two Hearts*, the follow up to her 2002 debut, *Pretty Things*.

The title track sets the album in motion, opening with a slow, shuffling acoustic guitar accompanied by the quiet tap of a cymbal. Martin immediately sets the tone singing, "Where do we go from here / I just don't know, my dear / How do we get to this? / It ain't the tears I miss."

Broken hearts are at the centre of so much music that it can be difficult to come up with a new way of addressing the topics of love and love gone wrong, but Martin stakes her ground on "Two Hearts." A steady kick drum soon joins in, acting as a bridge into the next verse, with a mournful viola crying out long, sustained notes in the background.

The song's chorus finds Martin turning around and finding hope in the prospect of trying again: "This kiss is long and hard / I do not know what I'm doing / I still believe in two hearts / Beating for something," and later, a relaxed banjo plucks along, giving the tune an extra lift as it heads to a close.

The second track, "Temporary Hell," is similarly nuanced, with a slightly grinning acoustic guitar strumming steadily over piano, and then the warbling arpeggios of an electric guitar.

Unfortunately, it's with the third song that the album begins to derail. The thumping and rolling drums of "You Come Home" are fine, but the

song never really takes off after it begins—unless you consider the drama of the inflated chorus of voices that closes the tune out to be a welcome thing, rather than misplaced.

"Bike Song" is similar in that it seemingly stands still, failing to take the listener on any sort of journey, and that's too often the case as *Two Hearts* draws on towards its end. Songs pass by in a pleasant enough way—everything is played well, and the emphasis always comes in just the right spot—but it also comes across as a little too polished when a rougher edge might have revealed a more fragile Martin within the music. As it is, she is hidden behind the shield of the production when it would be preferable to hear her out front with less protection.

But then Martin nears the end of the album. "Hard Day in June" is first, and it's the kind of country that is both heart-felt and modern—something that the majority of new country music rarely ever manages to pull off. Here, Martin is at her best, accompanied only by herself on the acoustic guitar and Dale Murray on dobro and harmony vocal as she sings sadly, "It's a hard day in June / Why do I have to be the one to tell the truth / We can't keep going at this pace." It's a brief, but perfect, reprieve from the album's plodding middle.

Likewise, the closing "China Box" sees Martin and her band returning to the sonic approach of the title track, using the instruments to wring every last drop of emotion from the song. There are creative flourishes throughout—a trumpet and some rattling percussion—but most of all, Martin's writing is strong here, closing the album on a high note and leaving one intrigued enough to wonder where she will go from here.

DUB PISTOLS  
SPEAKERS AND TWEETERS  
DEFEND MUSIC

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vuweekly.com

London's Dub Pistols is not a group easily defined, as its music continues to be a stew of genres. The band's third effort begins with the ethereal "Speed of Light," which sounds like it could be part of Linkin Park's future repertoire. It is subsequently followed by the funky, jiving remix of the Stranglers' "Peaches," featuring British hip-hop veteran Rodney P and Terry Hall, lead singer of the newly re-formed Specials. The way Hall later sings Blondie's "Rapture" is intensely hypnotizing, making it one of the standout tracks alongside "Running from the Thoughts"—a trumpet tune that may still cheer you up even if it is a lament over continuously returning to square one.

SIERRA HULL  
SECRETS  
ROUNDEN

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuweekly.com

It's easy to fixate on the age of astoundingly talented young musicians, although treating them as prodigies usually diminishes their work while praising it—adoration is heaped in the context of displays of craft and creative wisdom that outstrip their number of birthdays. At 16, bluegrass angel Sierra Hull is incredibly precocious, not only in terms of technical proficiency (on mandolin and guitar) but also confidence, grace and originality. It's not for nothing that she's seen as the next generation Alison Krauss—an admirer who's shared stages and players with Hull—although the younger artist has a honeyed voice that will likely mature into an earthier instrument than Krauss's perpetual ingénue vocals. What makes her age resonate, though, is Hull's uncanny grasp of thorough adult entanglements on *Secrets*. Hopefully she's got an empathetic imagination rather than a cupboard full of heartache at such a tender age.

THE LAST SHADOW PUPPETS  
THE AGE OF THE UNDERSTATEMENT  
DOMINO

DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

Maybe it's just because it's British voice backed by an orchestra, but there's almost a James Bond-theme quality to much of the Last Shadow Puppets' *The Age of Understatement*. Though, to be fair, at times it also sounds like the soundtrack for spaghetti western, and in other moments it's unabashedly romantic (as could be expected from the band's sentimental name)—basically, Final Fantasy's Overture. Pallet conducts the London Metropolitan Orchestra for "Sounds of the Cinema" night. Arctic Monkey Alex Turner and friend Miles Kane sounds surprisingly mature fronting an orchestra, with a born

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and melodrama that occasionally borrows from the duo stays true to its roots to keep it from going over the top, but the best of it is when it skirts that fringe, as in the side walk "Separate and Ever Deadly." I swear, it would make a great opening to *Quantum of Solace*.

**MATES OF STATE  
RE-ARRANGE US  
BARSUK**

Catchy, little-bit dancey indie rock has no reason being as boring or insipid as *Mates of State*. It's not that it's necessarily bad—it's kind of catchy, and a little bit dancey, after all—but man is it ever vapid. More often than not content to hide behind Kori Gardner's sweet vocals, *Re-Arrange Us*, the group's second record for Barsuk, is too cute by half, most songs doing nothing more than finding a pretty-enough melody and riding it into an abyss of sickly sweet pop. Gardner and husband/bandmate Jason Hammel wouldn't exploit, usually for no purpose greater than its own promulgation. Pleasant enough if you don't mind your music entirely vacuous, it's second-rate commercial radio fodder at best.

**THE REAL DEAL!  
HUNGOVER, BUT DEAD SOBER  
UNION 2112**

*Hungover, but Dead Sober* may have been made while the guys from the *Real Deal!* were hungover, but if it was in fact made while they were dead sober, then that's unfortunate. "Bombs Away!" and "No Stupid Chances," which stray from the general sonic themes throughout, are the better tracks that this record has to offer. However, there are six consecutive tracks that could easily be one song. In "What Happened to the Band?" the band admits that sometimes we'll have something to say, but when we don't there's no shame. The problem is when they ponder how feelings of loneliness led to the Dawson College shooting in "The Beating" and later mock superficiality in "Fashion War," vocals are inundated by slightly better-sounding instruments and interesting stories are subsequently lost in the noise.

**YOUNG & SEXY  
THE ARC  
MAY**

The music of *Young & Sexy* is neither of these things. *The Arc*, the band's fourth record, is full of low-key, relaxing sounds that probably won't be found in a club or on the radio. The music is in a time zone for those of us who are old and boring enough, there's a certain something that's appealing about *The Arc*. It's the subtle use of slide guitar, the use of the half-muffled vocals and the use of reformed harmonies that might even be the songwriting. The music is between annoying and strange for whatever reason, music is a language and it's with prehistoric language that enough to make *The Arc* a language.

**Keep on rockin' in the XBox**

**MUSIC  
ENTER SANDOR  
STEVEN SANDOR  
STEVEN SANDOR**

My wife and I are so 2002; we still enjoy the *Karaoke Revolution* series of games. Basically, each game comes with a finite amount of songs. Yes, as an incentive, some of the tunes are locked until a player accumulates enough points or experience to earn them, but, really, there aren't that many secret songs in all. If you wanted a whole slew of new songs, you had to buy another volume in the series. But the *Rock Band* franchise (and, to a smaller extent, the *Guitar Hero* game) has made another dramatic change to not only how gamers can enjoy the songs they are trying to master on their plastic-replica instruments, but how music is actually marketed to the masses. Gamers have the chance to download new songs pretty well every week; the songs can be imported into the game, giving users a steady stream of new material to enjoy—and record labels a chance to generate more revenue. After all, the downloads aren't free. But the system gives gamers a chance to download songs that might be too obscure to include in a regular video-game release, like the Buzzcocks' punk classic "Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn't?)," which was made available via download a couple of months back. This last month, however, heavy-metal veterans Mötley Crüe took the "Rock Band" marketing to another level. The band made its "Saints of Los Angeles" single available through *Rock Band* as a playable download, before it was given any kind of conventional release. That's right, you could try to sing like Vince Neil on your PlayStation before a casual fan could buy the track through iTunes or get it at the local record shop. As well, the Recording Industry Association of America reported that classic rock and metal albums like Judas Priest's *Screaming for Vengeance*, will be made available through the Xbox Live Marketplace and the PlayStation Store. So, once you've mastered "You've Got Another Thing Comin'" on the hardest level *Rock Band* can offer, you can go find the album and download it ASAP. Yes, the labels have realized that *Rock Band* can be a record store. But what's more evil? Paying for songs that you want to add to your game's library, or having to go out and buy another expensive edition of the game for a few more new songs? I prefer the *Rock Band* example. **v** Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto

STEVEN SANDOR is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto

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31**







## ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

Ernest Hemingway said that his best work was a very short story consisting of six words: "For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn." Alan Moore's brief masterpiece of fiction is, I think, just as good: "Machine. Unexpectedly. I'd invented a time." Here's another gem, written anonymously: "The last man on earth heard a knock on the door." Your assignment in the coming week, Aries, is to be as pithy as these terse geniuses. Proceed on the assumption that your effectiveness will thrive in direct proportion to your brevity and conciseness. Assume that you will be most likely to get what you want if you use the fewest words and the most minimal actions necessary.

## TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

"Too bad 90 per cent of the politicians give the other 10 per cent a bad reputation," said Henry Kissinger. I'm tempted to draw a similar conclusion about physicians, cops, lawyers, performance artists and a host of other professionals with whom I've had direct contact. Whether or not you agree with me, please be very picky in the coming days, Taurus. As you seek out "experts" to help or counsel you, make sure they are at the top of their respective fields. Do background research, get personal references, and try to experience them when their guards are down.

## GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

Do you realize that you now have a great

potential to instigate ringing surprises? Your knack for healing the seemingly unhealable is at a peak, as is your ability to accomplish the impossible, get insight into the incomprehensible and feel equanimity amidst the uncontrollable. What do you plan to do with all that mojo, Gemini? I suggest that you act like a character in a fairy tale who has been given three wishes. Not two or four, but three.

## CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

"Dear Rob: My mother tells me I'm fat but feeds me pork rinds. My strongest supporter is a person I want to wrap up like a mummy, put in a canoe and push out into the middle of the lake. My exuberant imagination has taken me hostage, violating its own principles. I'm so completely ambivalent and indecisive about everything that even my addictive nature can't figure out what to be addicted to. I'd embrace my contradictions if I could, but I can't because they've got me surrounded like a pink-haired, cross-dressing SWAT team frothed up on Red Bull. Can you point me in the direction of the exit from this circus-like hell? —Crazy Crab." Dear Crazy: I detect a lot of wit and style in your meditations. Maybe that's the purpose of this limbo you're temporarily lost in: it's an opportunity to build your skill at being lively and feisty and smart no matter what your outer circumstances are.

## LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

I love this excerpt from "The Seeker," a poem by Rilke in his *Book of Hours* (translated by Robert Bly): "I am circling around God, around the ancient tower, and I have been circling for a thousand years, and I still don't know if I am a falcon, or a storm, or a great song." Here's my own personal

variation: "I am circling around love, around the throbbing hum, and I have been circling for thousands of days, and I still don't know if I am a wounded saint, or a rainy dawn, or a creation story." Please compose your own version of this poem, Leo. It's an excellent time to fantasize about what you're circling around and what force of nature you might be.

## VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

Your role model is Tilly Trotter, a blind, 74-year-old grandmother who lives in the UK. She took up archery two years ago despite her handicap. Recently she pulled off a rare feat, shooting her arrow so precisely that it split another arrow already lodged in the target. Among archers, this is called a Robin Hood. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you now have the power to do something similar, Virgo: overcome a disadvantage in order to accomplish a riveting triumph that would be difficult even for those who don't have to deal with a limitation like yours. You're primed to carry out your personal version of a Robin Hood.

## LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Here's transpersonal psychologist Roger Walsh, writing in the December 2001 issue of *IONS Review*: "This is the first time in history that publicly acknowledging that you follow two or more distinct spiritual traditions would not have you burned at the stake, stoned to death, or facing a firing squad. We tend to forget what an extraordinary time this is, that for the first time in history we have the entirety of the world's spiritual and religious traditions available to us, and we can practice them ... without fear." I advise you to take full advantage of this extraordinary freedom,

Libra—especially now, while you're in a phase of your astrological cycle that's conducive to expanding your spiritual repertoire. Think about adding some ideas and practices and magic from outside your established belief system.

## SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

In her natal horoscope, Icelandic chanteuse Björk has the sun, moon and Neptune in the sign of Scorpio. Here's how she describes what it's like being her: "I have to re-create the universe every morning when I wake up, and kill it in the evening." Sound familiar? That's a pretty good summary of the temperament of your tribe, and especially so right now, as you navigate your way through the astrological House of Resurrection.

## SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Most astronomers are irrationally prejudiced against us astrologers. They typically deride our ancient art without ever having read any of the masters whose work articulates the core principles of astrology. It's the equivalent of speaking about the theory of relativity without ever having studied Einstein. Despite their disdain, I don't hate them back. On the contrary, I celebrate their efforts to understand the universe, and I make abundant use of the information they've gleaned. Be like me in the coming week, Sagittarius. Appreciate those who don't appreciate you, especially if they are doing good work that can benefit you and others.

## CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

This would be a good week to celebrate failure—to laugh about the comic horror stories of your past defeats, to gain a new appreciation for the prickly lessons you learned and

to let go of any regret, shame, or anger you might still be lugging around. I'd even recommend that you and your friends stage a Brag About Your Failures party. Try to outdo each other as you render in ignominious detail the things that went wrong, the mistakes you made, and the people who let you down. I think you'll be amazed at how effectively this will dissolve the karma left over from those misadventures—and help free you from their ghostly clutches.

## AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Maybe you've conceived a child at some time in your life. Maybe you never have or never will. Whatever the case, even if you're a man, I invite you to visualize the experience. Imagine that a force of nature has germinated, and that you are carrying another life within you. Try to approximate the uncanny twinge that a pregnant woman senses when her fetus first moves. This exercise will be a simulation of and rehearsal for the psychic quickening you will soon enjoy.

## PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

In her journals, Sylvia Plath said there are two different ways to be free of desires. The first is when you are "dead and rotten inside and there is nothing in the world." The second is when you are "so full and rich and have so many inner worlds that the outer world is not necessary for joy, because joy emanates from the inner core of your being." In the past, Pisces, you have had a few encounters with the dead and rotten state. But I believe you are now in a phase when the full and rich condition will prevail. During this grace period, you will not really need anything beyond what you already have. My advice? Start the celebration! ♥

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## ARTIST TO ARTIST

Harcourt House Arts Centre: Call for Submissions for  
Artist in Residence Program. Submission deadline:  
**May 31** Residency begins Nov. 1, 2008

## PROJECT ACCOUNTANT

Book publisher looking for highly motivated person with proven analytical skills to review accounting systems and procedures within a group of companies. This position will be responsible for reviewing management reports and providing accurate management information, maintaining and improving the job costing system, account and ledger reconciliation, as well as internal audit functions and audit preparation. This position offers the potential to grow with the company in the accounting area.

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- Proficient with the MS Office suite
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- ACCPAC or Simply Accounting experience preferred
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Referencing the Administrative  
Assistant position.





# Pathetic crap for dads 'who love to fork' as bad as crap for moms

## ADVICE ALT.SEX.COLUMN

ANDREA NEMERSON  
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

### DEAR READERS:

I was quite prepared to let the "expectation of blow jobs on Mother's Day" thing go, especially since Mother's Day itself is a couple weeks gone, but now the *Father's Day* press releases are trickling in (not gushing manfully but I suppose that's to follow) and the picture that emerges of the state of sex in the modern Western (hemisphere, not yippee-i-o-kiy-ay) bedroom is just so weird I can't let it alone.

First there was the Mother's Day gift-basket meant to get horny, aggrieved and yet entitled-feeling husbands to bug their wives for sex instead of going out and getting them a *pain au chocolat* (the baskets contained paint au chocolat but that

is not at all the same thing). To me this implies a target audience of couples who are not having sex, the female halves of which have to be jollied into it with cheesy "romantic" gifts and who, even more weirdly, can be jollied into it with cheesy "romantic" gifts.

And now I have a "New! For Father's Day!" ad from the last place I'd expect to produce a sleazy and ultimately rather sad commentary on the perceived state of modern, child-having marriage: a mom 'n' pop organic, non-sweatshop-made "family fashion" (novelty T-shirt) company. I mean! Women, would you get your husband a shirt that says "Daddy needs some love'n?" How about "My wife likes to spoon but I prefer to fork?" Bear in mind that these are supposed to be gifts. What are we saying here? Why not just go to CafePress and make him a shirt that says "You're not getting any and I think that's pretty funny, har har har?"

Oh, and men, would you wear it? Would you write me and tell me why? And if you'd order it yourself and wear it out to lunch (real men don't brunch, right?) on Father's Day to mortify your wife, explain that too. (By email, please, you don't sound like the sort of people I would like to meet in real life.) I'm mortified for those women and I don't even know any of them.

I truly don't. I swear I know a goodly number of heterosexuals—one does run into them now and then—and the cartoony vision these products and their promoters are promoting, it's just not something I see a lot of. I'm actually quite happy to report this, but I don't hear from or even hear about a lot of marriages in which the wives refuse sex out of contempt, complete lack of interest or utter lack of concern over whether their mates are happy or not. Recently I've been meeting a lot of women who are hoping to regain lost sex drives and

lives after having babies, and even they (of course these particular women are the ones who are motivated enough to bother talking about it) never show a hint of contempt for the men they aren't doing it with. They'd like to do it. They want to want to it. They've just lost touch with it. Desire disorder is the dysfunction of the day—just wait till the drug that fixes *that* hits the market. People will be all "Viagra who?"

While cheesy dad gifts are on the table, I would like to register one more complaint. I don't know what the gift-promoters are trying to pull here but it struck me as quite completely unfair that after the stupid Mother's Day come-ons, which were both sexed-up and creepily infantilizing, the first thing I got that was aimed at dads said simply that you should get him a bottle of really nice single malt scotch. What, no boxer shorts on a stick?

While on the subject of knowing a few

heterosexuals here and there, I was asked if I would comment on the California Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage (um, they were for it). Sure, I have to admit I have nothing particularly witty to say about legal gay marriage. I'm for it. I'm a lot more for it than some of my gayest friends are, as a matter of fact they're in the "Why should we beg you let us pretend to be just like you?" camp while I'm over here in the "It's not fair that I should get to claim a certain kind of legitimacy for my relationship that you don't get for yours" camp. They pat me on the head. Me, I'm just dorky enough to be all rejoice-y about this, and hope that my Midwestern friend's "spousal unit" gets to make an honest woman of her after, oh, 15 years and two kids. And how can any event which occasions this headline: "Star Trek's George Takei to Marry Long-time Partner" fail to produce a "woo" and a "hoo?"

LOVE, ANDREA

### ARTIST TO ARTIST

Harcourt House Arts Centre: Call for Submissions for Artist in Residence Program. Submission deadline: **May 31** Residency begins Nov. 1, 2008

The Alberta Society of Artists with the Edmonton Public Library is presenting a free public lecture with Eileen Raucher-Sutton on **Thu, May 29**, 7pm at the Stanley A. Milner Theatre, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq

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Women Always FREE:  
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**LSS**  
LESS SMOKE SMELL

MIRAGE LEAVES  
LESS LINGERING SMOKE SMELL  
IN AN ENCLOSED AREA.\*



\*WHEN COMPARED TO A TYPICAL CANADIAN CIGARETTE.

**WARNING**

**CIGARETTES LEAVE YOU BREATHLESS**

Tobacco use causes crippling, often fatal lung diseases such as emphysema.

Health Canada



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**REFRESH YOUR FUN**